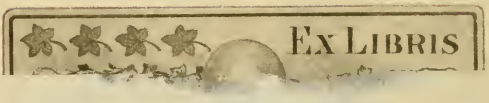
NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 08235282 8

1. Name (Cook, J M)

1201



LIBRARY

of the

Eugenics Record Office

Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island

This Book was acquired by gift

from Dr. C. B. Davenport

of Carnegie Institution of Washington

Date

INDEXED

AN
(Cook, J.)
Cook

INDEXED
b

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/memoirofrevjames00cook

Yours Respectfully
Elmer McCarthy

MEMOIR

OF

REV. JAMES M. COOK.

BY

THEODORE D. COOK.

BOSTON:
JAMES M. USHER.
1854.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
526313
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1950 L

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by
J. M. USHER,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

Stereotyped by
HOBART & ROBBINS,
New England Type and Stereotype Foundery,
BOSTON.

To the

SECOND UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY

OF PROVIDENCE,

GATHERED BY HIS LABORS AND BLESSED BY FOUR YEARS OF HIS MINISTRY,

THIS

Memoir of their late Pastor

IS

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THEIR PRESENT PASTOR,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

About four years have elapsed since the death of my brother. During that time, I have frequently been urged, by ministers and laymen whose opinions are entitled to great consideration, to furnish a suitable memoir of his life and labors. But, for reasons which need not be mentioned here, I have delayed the preparation of such a work until the present time. And now I have to regret that it is so imperfectly performed, — that it comes so far short of doing justice to its subject, so far short of what the public had a right to demand as a just tribute to his memory. But, such as it is, I commit it to his friends and to the denomination generally, with *little* hope of distinction as an author, and *less* apprehension of neglect.

The following pages will suggest, with sufficient clearness, some of the embarrassments which have been encountered in their preparation for the press. It will be seen that, owing to his neglect to make a record of the important incidents of his life, to date his sermons, to keep a copy of his letters, a list of the marriages he solemnized, the funerals he attended, and the names of the places in which he preached, many interesting details, many suggestive statistics, which it had been desirable to introduce, have necessarily been excluded from the work.

The historical sketches of Universalism, in the several fields of his labor, are the best which the material at hand enabled me to furnish. To have made them more full and perfect would doubtless have proved more satisfactory to both reader and writer.

I have been obliged to speak of persons who are still living and with whom the departed had intercourse, for the purpose of showing how far their conduct was active in moulding and developing

his character, and in giving direction to his energies. In all such cases, I have striven to guard against the sin of setting "down aught in malice," and labored to "extenuate" every fault which I have been compelled to record. I have said all I could conscientiously in approval of those whom I have named.

Personal reminiscences, which are so freely introduced, may be relied upon as true to life, — at least, may be regarded as a faithful transcript of those cherished records stored away in the sacred archives of memory. If those records have been colored by the fondness with which, through many years, they have been consulted, if their darker aspects have been unconsciously merged in the brighter (as in some instances they possibly have), they are still valuable as an approximation to facts which they are designed to represent in the simplicity of historical truth.

Valuable assistance has been rendered me by correspondents, whose communications are duly credited to their respective authors. And I take this opportunity publicly to express to them my most grateful acknowledgments for such assistance. Others, whose communications do not appear, have greatly aided me in the performance of my task by their words of encouragement and approval, and by valuable suggestions, which have not been without their influence in giving tone and character to my efforts. God bless them!

And now, in the hope that I have been saved from doing great injustice, in the following pages, to the memory of a brother beloved, — to one whose brief ministry was among the most brilliant and successful of any that has ever blessed the Universalist denomination, — and not without some faint hope that, under God, my labors may prove advantageous to his widow and her fatherless children, by adding to her scanty stores, — through the generosity of a grateful people, may enable *her* to educate one or both of *them* for the ministry of reconciliation, *the work to which he early devoted them*, — I send forth this memoir, to find approval among friends, and quite regardless of the reception which awaits it among the enemies of him whose life it unveils.

THEODORE D. COOK.

PROVIDENCE, AUG. 4, 1854.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY, ... 9

CHAPTER II.

PARENTAGE, ... 16

CHAPTER III.

BIRTH — EARLY INFLUENCES AND INDICATIONS, ... 25

CHAPTER IV.

REMOVAL — NEW INFLUENCES, ... 40

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER CHANGE, ... 50

CHAPTER VI.

SCHOOL AND SCHOOL TEACHING, ... 60

CHAPTER VII.

THE VOICE OF DEATH, ... 70

CHAPTER VIII.

SUGGESTIONS OF A JOURNEY, ... 74

CHAPTER IX.

STUDENT LIFE IN ROCHESTER, ... 88

CHAPTER X.

COMMENCES PREACHING, ... 101

CHAPTER XI.

PUBLIC SENTIMENT IN WESTERN NEW YORK, ... 112

CHAPTER XII.

HIS RECEPTION IN CHILI, ... 121

CHAPTER XIII.

LABORS IN CHILI, ... 129

CHAPTER XIV.
CHURCHVILLE MINISTRY, ... 146
CHAPTER XV.
AN INCIDENT, ... 173
CHAPTER XVI.
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR, ... 181
CHAPTER XVII.
SOMNAMBULISM, ... 201
CHAPTER XVIII.
MINISTRY IN PERRINTON, ... 214
CHAPTER XIX.
LABORS IN PERRINTON, ... 223
CHAPTER XX.
LABORS IN VICTOR, ... 251
CHAPTER XXI.
UNIVERSALISM IN PROVIDENCE, ... 272
CHAPTER XXII.
CALL TO PROVIDENCE, ... 287
CHAPTER XXIII.
SOCIETY IN PROVIDENCE, ... 292
CHAPTER XXIV.
LABORS IN PROVIDENCE, ... 296
CHAPTER XXV.
HIS LAST MOVE, ... 362
CHAPTER XXVI.
BALTIMORE EXPERIENCES, ... 371
CHAPTER XXVII.
DEATH, ... 387
CHAPTER XXVIII.
FUNERAL, AND TESTIMONIES OF RESPECT, ... 403
CHAPTER XXIX.
CONCLUSION, ... 421

MEMOIR.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Biography is valuable only so far as, by a presentation of facts developed in the life of its subject, it encourages virtue and rebukes vice. The desire to perpetuate the memory of a friend, whose energies, on earth, were consecrated to the highest interests of humanity, is both natural and commendable; but whoever attempts this in utter disregard of facts, and at the expense of real character, is not entitled to the name of a biographer. He may excite admiration for a genius which enables him to throw a tinge of glory around all the darker aspects of life, and exalt and magnify the most ordinary virtues till they glow, seemingly, with all the radiance of human perfection. And friends may praise the fiction. We seldom fault a flattered portrait of our idols. We look approvingly on brighter hues than ever adorned the original. Daguerreotypes receive but meagre applause from partial hearts. Because they are *too real*, they are often wanting in grace and finish. We would have some touches of art added to the reflections of nature. We

would have deformities veiled, and every feature clothed with an air of loveliness. And so in regard to the portraiture of character. Friendship and affection demand that it be executed in such a manner as to exhibit every possible grace. Every virtue must be dignified as a glorious achievement, and every fault excused to circumstances over which the actor had no control.

But truth *is* better than fiction. The daguerreotype is more deservedly esteemed than a fancy sketch, blended with the image of features impressed upon the heart. It is more esteemed, and more wisely cherished, because it is more true to life. And so the most faithful representation of character, with all the influences which have contributed to its development, appeals to the higher admiration of friends, and, at the same time, reads a more impressive lesson to those who may be induced to study it. Its weaknesses are warnings, and because they are real they are effective. Its virtues are encouragements — helps to humanity. They are to the creations of the biographer what the presence of a great man is to his lithograph likeness. Portraits of the Hungarian patriot were scattered broad-cast through the land; but little enthusiasm was kindled, by the sight of these, in behalf of his cause. But, whenever he made his appearance in public, the masses thronged to catch a glimpse of his person, and, if successful, felt abundantly rewarded for standing hours in the rain, being jostled in the crowd, or even for submitting to be run over by blinder admirers than themselves. There is a power in the actual that never belonged to the ideal. And virtues — victories achieved over temptation, spirituality cherished and man-

ifested amidst the corruptions of worldliness, faith in God, challenging the powers of superstition, and growing brighter and brighter unto the perfect day — virtues like these, speaking to us in the life of the departed, tell upon the interests of our souls with a power never yet vouchsafed to fiction.

Under convictions of this character the writer now addresses himself to the task of presenting to the public a brief sketch of the Life and Labors of the late Rev. James Monroe Cook. That he shall be able to preserve his mind free from that bias which deep fraternal love might naturally be supposed to give to thought, he neither expects nor desires. But he does hope to be able to present the simple story of a life, that has left its impress upon the affairs of our denomination, free from the distortions of a morbid partiality, — to point out, in a spirit of tenderness and compassion, the frailties which marked its progress, and to exhibit, with the force of simple truth, that vivacity of spirit, that energy of purpose, and that deep-toned devotion, which made him an agreeable friend and companion, and an efficient laborer in the vineyard of his Master. He hopes, in a word, to be able to present a portrait of the man, which, from its fidelity to the original, his friends shall readily recognize, and which the heart aspiring for high attainments in Christian graces shall gaze upon with profit, as well as with feelings of admiration.

Within a few years past, death has been busy among the watchmen on the walls of our Zion. Some of the noblest and best have fallen. That great light in the Empire State, long celebrated as an eloquent man, and

mighty in the Scriptures, was summoned from the scene of his earthly labors a few months previous to the departure of the subject of these pages. The sublimity of his faith, and the beauty of his life, were both represented in the hour of his death. Blending their charms, they dispelled the gloom from the "dark valley." As he approached the last change, he expressed a strong desire that it might take place on the Christian Sabbath. This boon was granted him. But when his spirit took its upward flight, to realize the fruition of hopes it had cherished, a shadow fell upon our Zion. The fraternity which he had so long counselled in wisdom, so much elevated and blest by his example, and now so much encouraged and strengthened by his peaceful and triumphant death, mourned his loss, as children mourn the loss of a tender, wise, and prudent father.

Another noble spirit also soon followed. Stricken down in the midst of his usefulness by a malignant disease (in the progress of which he was bereft of his reason), he was mourned by his brethren with unaffected sorrow. Of studious habits, actuated by an ambition that counted usefulness to his fellow-beings an essential proof of fidelity to the Master, he has left a name to be cherished and revered.

One of the western stars, bright amidst a glorious constellation, which for a few years past has been shedding its radiance on that beautiful section of our Zion, about this time also set, to rise amidst the splendors of that firmament which spans the kingdom of glory, there to shine for ever and ever.

More recently, New England has sent to New York

a tribute to hallow her soil; in Lyons the dust of one of the strong champions of our faith now reposes, who removed thither to preach the Gospel, only (as to us it seems) *by his death*. Lawrence, too, must be reckoned among the desolate places of our Zion; has restored to heaven a gifted spirit, which, to human calculation, seemed necessary on earth for carrying forward the great work of reconciling the world to God.

And, what shall I say of Charlestown and Boston? of Balfour and Ballou? Of the former it may safely be said, that our denomination is more indebted to him than to any other man for a critical knowledge of Scripture terms, which by the votaries of popular errors have been employed to darken the counsels of God relating to the final destiny of the race, and to discourage hopes of his salvation. Seizing the weapons which had been forged by the adversaries of Universalism, he employed these weapons for the overthrow of their system; and then, in the hour of his triumph, boldly challenged them to gather up the scattered fragments, and to reconstruct their fallen temple. Goaded on by this expression of defiance, one * deeply implicated in the treachery of affording "aid and comfort" to this enemy of Orthodoxy, made the attempt and failed,—signally failed. A few others, boasting less strength but equal valor, rushed to the contest, resolved to reconquer the strongholds that had been lost; but they, too, ingloriously retreated, after a few unsuccessful efforts, and left the victor strong in the strength of God. The laurels which he won in this

* Professor Stuart, of Andover.

service he was permitted to wear until he received the crown.

Of Mr. Ballou it may be said, he was the great expounder of the Divine Government. Less given to exegetical discourse than Mr. Balfour, and wanting, perhaps, in his qualifications as a critic and a scholar, he seized, with a giant intellect, upon the great principles of the divine economy, as deduced from the perfections of God and the testimonies of his word, and proclaimed them to the world in demonstration of the spirit and of power. He saw in the Gospel of Christ a beautiful and harmonious system of divine truth, contrasting gloriously with the errors and absurdities of human creeds. The former was calculated to awaken love and reverence for God; while the latter tended to confuse humble minds, and to reduce them to the servitude of superstition, to disgust the thoughtful, and to provoke the contempt of the unbelieving. And consecrating his energies to the promulgation of the Gospel, when he sunk to rest it was said of him, in strict justice, that he had done more to Christianize human creeds than any other man since the days of the apostles.

Biographies of these men have been given to the public, in a style worthy of their subjects, worthy also of their respective authors. And, if we add to these the names of three of the most distinguished female authors, whose productions have added so much lustre to our denominational literature, and whose lives have been written in a manner calculated to excite our highest admiration, a doubt will naturally arise in the mind as to the propriety of multiplying publications of this character, especially at the present time.

On this point I desire no controversy with any one. I cordially agree with many others, that, as a purely *financial operation*, it had proved far more successful had the work been published some four years ago, at the time when the denomination felt most keenly the loss of him to whose life these pages are given. But, had a memoir been issued at that early period, it must have been prepared under influences calculated to give it more of the characteristics of a eulogy than of a biography; and it would consequently have served a less valuable purpose to the reader, to all save the publisher. As it is, the writer has taken time to recover from the shock which his feelings received in the removal of a beloved brother; to meditate upon the character which his life unfolded; to determine, as far as possible, the secret of that remarkable success which crowned his labors in the vineyard of his Master, and of that fortitude which enabled him at last to walk through the valley and the shadow of death with unfaltering confidence, with a hope full of immortality.

I add, that the demand for a biography of Mr. Cook may not be general in the denomination. It may, indeed, be limited to those circles in which he has personally labored; to persons who have felt the power of his stirring eloquence, have thereby been fired with a zeal for the cause he advocated, the cause he commended to others in his life and in his death. And if among these only this unpretending volume shall find approval, if among these the virtues which adorned his life shall be, by this means, cherished and reproduced, let no one say that it has been prepared or published in vain.

CHAPTER II.

PARENTAGE.

The traveller on the Hartford and New Haven Railroad is presented with a fine view of the old town of Wallingford, in New Haven county. The main street lies along the summit of a gentle ridge, and is about half a mile east of, and nearly parallel with, the railroad. This street is adorned with many venerable old mansions, which are surrounded by gardens, abounding in fruit and ornamental trees. It also boasts of no less than two church-spires, visible from the great thoroughfare, which serve to remind the traveller that the inhabitants of the town are religiously inclined. The intervening slope and valley are dotted with beautiful dwellings, and with costly structures reared for mechanical purposes. The dwellings, exhibiting a variety of modern architecture, are, like those on the main street, mostly surrounded with highly-ornamented gardens; and, as seen from the railroad, in summer, the whole village presents a most inviting aspect to the voluntary exiles from the crowded city, who seek a retreat in the country during the warm season.

Among the earliest records of Wallingford are found the names of Cook and Hall. Both these names appear

among the original settlers of the town, who came from England; and both are enrolled among its inhabitants at the present day. My father, Lyman Cook, was a descendant of these two families.

My paternal grandfather, Amos Cook, had ten children,— six sons and four daughters. Of the third wife my father was born, and was the favorite son of his old age.

I have never been able to learn that my grandfather was much distinguished among his neighbors for anything, except for the ugliness of his person, the benevolence of his heart, and his devotion to the forms of the Episcopal church. He was a man of *marked features*, however, if not of "marked character." His nose was so large that it often subjected him to the severest jests. A sister of his was also endowed with a most bountiful supply of the same organ. Living on opposite sides of the same street, they occasionally indulged in conversation, seated or standing in their respective doors. One summer evening, just as the sun was sinking behind the horizon, and a number of his neighbors were "homeward bound" from the toils of the day, they had taken their position for a little family chat at that grateful hour. As some topic of peculiar interest most engaged their thoughts, a farmer might have been seen approaching with a load of hay. Seeing a little behind him a number of neighbors, he suddenly stopped his team, and stood earnestly gazing about, as if attempting to take the precise dimensions of his load, and to determine the exact distance between the two huge noses which, at that moment, were projecting into the street. So intent

upon this business did he seem to be, that apparently he took no notice of his approaching neighbors, but as they came up he muttered out "It won't go." Thus arresting the attention of the passers-by, just as they were in the range of the busy talkers, he raised his voice, pitching it to a note of despair, and in most beseeching tones exclaimed,

"*Mr. Cook! will you and your sister have the kindness to turn your noses down the street, so that I can pass with this load of hay before dark!*"

The effect was most ludicrous. A roar of laughter burst involuntarily from the neighbors, which the person addressed construed into an approval of the indignity, and he could never entirely forgive the waggish perpetrator of the unfeeling jest.

He remained in the communion of the Episcopal church until his death, which took place in July, 1813. Of the religious opinions of my grandmother, I am not informed, but suppose, from certain facts, that her preferences were given to the Congregational church.

My father, Lyman Cook, left Wallingford at the age of seventeen years, and emigrated to the State of New York, and settled in Marcellus, Onondaga county. Here his time was devoted, for the most part, to agricultural pursuits. For a short time he taught a district school. By industry and perseverance, he early acquired a reputation for integrity and general intelligence, which was often rewarded by his fellow-townsmen with places of honor, responsibility, and emolument. He was a man of robust frame and great physical strength. He had a voice of great compass, — of rich, but commanding tones.

Militia honors were his, and as a field officer he sustained a very high reputation.

My mother's maiden name was Mary Norton. She was the second daughter of Freeman Norton, who served his country in the Revolution, and lived to a good old age, to witness the gradual development of its principles and institutions. He died 1836, aged eighty-four years. My mother was a native of Martha's Vineyard, where the name, Norton, has been familiar since the first settlement of that island. She early left the island for Williamsburg, Mass., where she was reared to toil, and taught the doctrines of Calvin with great care by a pious mother. Intending to devote herself to the work of teaching, she spent several months in prosecuting her studies with the parish minister at Conway; and she always spoke of him with the most affectionate regard. She had not yet attained her twentieth year when she emigrated to Marcellus with her oldest brother, and soon after entered upon the important duties of teaching school. She had never connected herself with a church, but she was eminently religious in her feelings, and the dogmas she imbibed in childhood were often to her a source of great disquiet and painful apprehensions. But as life advanced, as the heart sent forth one after another of its deepest and holiest affections to bless kindred and acquaintances, family and friends, she felt daily more and still more sensibly that she was allied, by common sympathies, to the whole race, and involuntarily at war with her narrow and selfish faith.

Few women ever loved the Bible more than did this sainted mother. Regarding it with the profoundest rev-

erence, as a revelation of the divine character and purposes, she accepted its precepts as the guide of her life, and its promises as a never-failing solace in affliction. She studied its sacred pages from day to day, not as an irksome duty, but as a most precious privilege. She taught her children to respect its divine authority, as the Word of God, and to accept it with grateful hearts as the man of their counsel.

I have often thought that there was an element of superstition in the sentiment with which she regarded that "old family Bible." But who shall say that what, in her, appeared like superstition, was not a beautiful expression of trusting faith, well pleasing in the sight of God? Be this as it may, I cannot recall the expressions of the sentiment to which I have referred, without feeling my reverence for her memory increased. As I write, I see her, as in the days of her mortality, when in affliction, or even in doubt in regard to the path of duty, flying to this fountain of light and instruction to solve her doubts, and to assuage her grief. The old family Bible is in her hands. I watch her lips, — silently they move, to express a brief but earnest prayer of her waiting heart — a prayer for some suggestion from its inspired utterances; this finished, reverently she opens the Book Divine — her eye rests upon the page to which, by chance, she has turned, and the first sentence that arrests her attention contains for her the hint she seeks. That hint is sufficient for her. It becomes to her the voice of God, and either inspires hope of future good, or presentiments of coming ills, — either illumines the course she is pursuing, or warns her to turn aside from it.

Well do I remember, when a brother, older than myself, was gradually sinking beneath the influence of disease, and long before his case was deemed hopeless by his physician, she betook herself to this oracle, and, in words sufficiently plain for her to comprehend, she was told that he must die. And while all around were hoping for, and confidently expecting, his recovery, concealing her apprehensions from the doomed victim of death, she prayed only for resignation to the trial before her. In due time it came — her presentiments were realized.

On another occasion, my oldest brother was prostrated by a bilious intermittent fever, of the most malignant stamp. Many in the neighborhood attacked with it had died. His case was pronounced hopeless by his physician. And so indeed it seemed. Whenever the fever left him there was apparently an utter prostration of his physical energies. Then the most powerful stimulants were applied. Then, too, the most active exertions, in bathing and rubbing, were deemed necessary to keep up the circulation in the extremities, and thus to arrest the fatal tendencies of the disease.

But at length the crisis came. One morning, about the break of day, the family were all summoned to take their leave of him; for, in the estimation of all present, *save one*, his hour was come. His hands and feet were cold — the chill of death was there. The pulse no longer beat, and the heart had nearly ceased its pulsations. The eyes were closed by a neighbor's hand. Another neighbor bowed at his bed-side, and breathed a fervent prayer to heaven for a blessing upon his departing spirit.

Oh, it was a sublime spectacle, now, to see that mother,

who, for more than a week, had not closed her eyes in sleep, watching still, and calmly resting in the assurance she had, in the manner already described, derived from the Word of God, that her first-born would be restored to health — watching, with an eye of faith, for some favorable issue of all these unpromising scenes — watching for the angel of life to descend, to scatter the clouds, and write again his name on that brow, now seemingly moist with the damps of death! Nor did she watch in vain. A few moments more and some convulsive action of the lungs indicated the presence of the spirit. Ether was administered, and applied externally to the chest. The closed eye was unsealed — death retired from the contest, vanquished, for the time — gradually the symptoms of returning consciousness appeared — the prostrate energies were restored to vigor; and now, a quarter of a century later, the victim of this terrible disease still lives.

I introduce these examples here to show the profound regard which that sainted mother cherished for the Word of God, and the impressions which its suggestions made upon her mind.

Constantly dwelling upon its lessons, she very naturally came to embrace the doctrine which, to the unprejudiced mind, it so clearly reveals, viz., the doctrine of God's impartial grace and salvation. She dwelt upon the great and exceedingly precious promises of God in Christ Jesus, till the gloom of the present was lost in the glory of the future; and for years before her death, her correspondence with her children breathed at once fervent prayers for their welfare, and earnest longings for a reunion with the loved and lost in heaven.

Qualities of mind and heart are said to be transmitted from parents to their offspring. And may we not, on this hypothesis, account for the predilection of several children of such a mother — their predilection for the ministry? Be this as it may, several of them were early impressed with the conviction that the great mission of their lives was to preach the Gospel; and that to proclaim its "unsearchable riches," and to secure the triumphs of its power in the earth, is the noblest calling of man. This impression decided the professional career of the writer, of the subject of these pages, and of an elder brother, the Rev. Wm. B. Cook, now of Gaines, Orleans county, New York. The last named, commencing his ministry at a later period of life than either of the former, has seemed to act as if striving to make up what he thus lost by delay — as if constantly under the impression that, as his time was shorter, it behooved him to be more diligent, so he might in humility say, when called hence, "Father, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." His success has been commensurate with his zeal. For, although he has preached on an average not less than four sermons per week for nearly two years, he has come far short of answering all the demands upon his services. His star still rises.

It may be proper to add here, that the family of which the subject of these memoirs was a member, consisted of thirteen children, three of whom died in infancy. The third son died of cancer, at the age of twenty-one years. The circle of children was not again broken until August 14, 1850. Eight still survive, and are, with a single exception, scattered through various parts of New York

and Ohio. Though widely separated from each other, as they are, and have been, in person, they have all clung to the same faith — to the doctrines of Christ as they learned them from their parents. Death is the only voice which has summoned them together for the last quarter of a century. And this voice has been effective but twice during that period, viz., when my brother died, in January, 1832, and when my father was buried, July 4, 1837. Death, and the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is "the Resurrection and the Life," only can bring them together, and effect a re-union never more to be broken up.

CHAPTER III.

BIRTH — EARLY INFLUENCES AND INDICATIONS.

James Monroe Cook was born in Marcellus, Onondaga county, New York, November 24, 1818. He was the eighth son of his parents, and the tenth child.

Various are the influences which serve to develop character. The locality of home, its discipline, its affections and sympathies; the scenes of childhood and the character of its associations; education, whether derived from schools or from society, and perhaps, more than all these, the native force of personal qualities, mould and fashion the future man. To analyze these influences, and to give to each its just weight in the production of the result which the world has seen and admired, is at once the business and the perplexity of the biographer. To do it successfully, is to render a valuable aid to the reader, by showing him what influences to seek and what to repel; what to apply to, and what to withhold from society, for its improvement, so far as his personal efforts may extend. But, in the same proportion as such a service is valuable to the reader, it is difficult for the writer. The reason is obvious, for who but the Omniscient has ever known the discipline of any heart? Who, save him, has taken cognizance of its struggles with

worldly passions, or read its secret aspirations for a higher life? Who beside has traced, with the least show of accuracy, its marvellous history,—its course through glory and gloom, light and shade, hope and fear, rejoicing and sorrow, life and death,—and been able to determine the precise results of those alternations on the elements of character? Acquainted as we may think ourselves to be with our own history, we often search in vain for the influences that have fashioned and formed *our* characters. Memory may have treasured the successive events of life, and with candor we may have reviewed them often for the sole purpose of determining why this passion or that inclination rules us; *why we are* what we and the world see ourselves to be; and yet, when our conclusions are formed, by processes which we deem candid and impartial, the result is very likely to betray the extent of our *personal interest*, in giving to the portrait a most gracious and self-glorifying aspect. And if it is thus difficult to analyze our own character, how accurately can we be supposed to know another? to know one who has been with us only occasionally from childhood, with whom we have enjoyed only a little personal intercourse, and who has left behind him only the result of his well directed energies, *without* any record of his daily experience, to indicate the secret sources of that power and greatness which he displayed?

I make these remarks to guard the reader against any extravagant expectations in reference to the following pages. The materials for such a biography as I could desire to present to the world, I have not been able to procure. My brother left but very few written

records of his brief career; none except his manuscript sermons and letters, and a few fugitive articles, published in different papers of the denomination. His sermons are, for the most part, without date, and no record is preserved of the time when or place where they were delivered. Many of them are mere skeletons, or short notes on scraps of paper, so meagre as to give but a very imperfect outline of the discourses preached from them. His letters relate chiefly to items of business, and show evident marks of having been hastily written, for private and not for public inspection. To this general characteristic there are some few exceptions. Still *his deeds are recorded*, are written in many grateful, loving hearts. The force, the purity, and the sublimity of his character, are attested by the fruits of his labors in the vineyard of his Master, and he has, therefore, claims to live in history, as well as in the affectionate regards of those who knew his worth, and loved the truth which he preached.

The home of childhood ever exerts a powerful influence upon the whole life. If its memories are grateful, wherever we roam we recall its scenes and dwell upon them as the most blessed of earth. Indeed, they become the standard by which we judge all other scenes, awarding merit to those resembling these, and condemning all others.

And why should it not be so? It is there we look out upon the glories of this beautiful world, when the mind is susceptible of the deepest and the most lasting impressions. There the delights of association are first experienced, friendships are formed, the fires of love are

kindled, and life, unveiling its mysteries, provokes the inquiry, *what is man?* From the little circle which spreads out around us, and is bounded by the visible horizon, we derive our first conceptions of the world and its Author; conceptions which, however erroneous, we cherish in remembrance with peculiar fondness through all our subsequent career. It is there that we receive the first impressions of duty, of obligations to God and man. And there, too, the religious element begins to develop itself; our lisping lips are taught the first accents of prayer, and our young hearts, unstained with crime, first aspire to communion with the great Source of purity and love.

It is not wonderful, therefore, that men almost invariably characterize their birth-place, wherever located, whether amidst the Alps of Switzerland, the Lowlands of Holland, or the prairies of the West, by the terms "beautiful," "romantic," "delightful," and oftener "most delightful." Is it because this is the only spot in the universe of God that is seen in the retrospect illumined by the innocence of our own hearts?

All these terms, I have often thought, might be applied to the birth-place of my brother. For the house in which he was born, little can be said; except, perhaps, that, bearing a striking resemblance to many of its cotemporaries, it was *fashionable.* Had a candidate for the presidency lived there, it would doubtless have been celebrated as a "log cabin," and a cut of it would have found its way into all parts of this great republic, as a most indubitable proof of the democracy of its occupant. But as it was the home of the humble, it has generally

been spoken of by the family as simply the *Old Log House.*

But of the locality, the partial heart can say more. It was situated on the brow of a hill, which rises gently from the western bank of a stream known as the Nine-mile Creek. It commanded a fine view of the Falls, (since called Union Falls), which are formed, not like the famed Niagara by a rushing stream, plunging down a mighty precipice, but by a rapid descent of the waters of this winding creek over its pebbled and rocky bed, with here and there an occasional fall, approaching to a perpendicular. Among the earliest recollections of James, the sweet music of these falling waters held an important place. At night it had lulled him to sleep. It had added to his pleasures by day. In sickness it had soothed, and in health animated and cheered his heart. As the stream wound its serpentine course along, the rocks of various sizes, rising abruptly from its bed, divided its shallow waters into various currents, and gave to each a peculiar voice; a note of its own, to add the charm of variety to the hymn of praise which constantly arose from the more imposing falls. From the opposite bank of this stream, the land, though rising rapidly, was graced with a few dwellings, boasting no great elegance, but yet, with their surrounding gardens and fruit trees, giving to the hill-side a most picturesque appearance. Here the rays of the setting sun lingered for a season after its light had faded from his childhood home; and often have I seen him walking along the brow of the hill on which he lived, while yet the setting sun was visible, to amuse himself with the giant shadows

which his childish form, at that grateful hour, cast across the chasm threaded by the creek on the opposite shore. From the brow of the hill which formed the eastern bank of the stream, the land rose gradually, and in summer was adorned with woodlands and cultivated fields, with orchards and grazing herds, that lent enchantment to the landscape, which, when I recall, I long to gaze upon once more. Just before the subject of this memoir had taken up his abode in Baltimore, he sought the highest felicity which his heart coveted on earth in revisiting these scenes of his childhood, and thus deepening the impressions which they had made upon his young heart. We shall have occasion to speak more at length of this visit in due time, and only refer to it here as an evidence of the influence which these scenes exerted upon his whole life. In such transcendent beauties, God spoke in sweetest accents to his young heart; and is it too much to believe that the echoes of the still small voice he then heard, were ever present to his soul, soothing his grief, subduing his passions, and encouraging him in the work of his high calling? "O Lord God, thou knowest!"

James often recurred to these scenes in private conversation. In his public discourses he found in them the most forcible illustrations of the charms of nature. He painted them with graphic skill, when dwelling upon the glories of the Creator's works, — the gorgeous hues which flamed up and crowned the hill that rose far above his humble dwelling on the west, and the landscape already described on the east, the farthest limit of which, clad with the primal forest, seemed the base of the mighty

arch of heaven, reflecting through all seasons the last rays of the king of day.

To those familiar with these scenes, it was evident that they gave a tinge to all his sublimer conceptions of the universe. Indeed, through life, though early removed from these scenes, he ever looked upon the world from the stand-point of the old log house. Blessed be God for the memories of childhood.

We have said that James was the eighth son of his parents. Not many years intervened between my birth and his. But, short as was the time, it had wrought wonderful changes in the family discipline to which we were respectively subjected in childhood. As I remember that discipline, it was mild but firm, decided and efficient. While it inspired respect and reverence, it seldom failed to secure obedience. But in all its essential virtues, it had most sensibly declined, when brought to bear on him. What would have been regarded by his elder brothers as a great stretch of parental indulgence, was regarded by him as unnecessary restraint; he consequently hastened to self-control with rapid strides. Nor was any attempt, worthy of the name, made by my parents to prevent the realization of his desires in this respect. At a period of life, therefore, at which others, who had gone before, deemed filial obedience the highest prerogative of children, he had attained to a position in which he was playing the familiar *adviser and associate* of *him* who, till now, had deemed it not a privilege only, but a duty, to *rule* his household with undisputed authority. He was not reckless; he was not wilfully disobedient. There was no unkindness in his

manner. He was most devotedly attached to his parents, and remained so until their death. While he regarded their desires, when authoritatively expressed, as the highest rule of his conduct, he was often engaged, perhaps unconsciously, in moulding these desires the better to suit his own caprices, and to sanction the course he had marked out for himself to pursue. And doubtless in this he was but too successful.

This decline of authority in the family circle, it may be remarked in passing, is not uncommon. Parents are usually very careful to establish their claims to filial obedience as soon as a subject of discipline appears, and is capable of understanding authority. Having accomplished this, they maintain their right to rule with becoming dignity for a few years. During this time they have no patience with a hesitating submission — with obedience accompanied by murmurs. It must be full and free.

But pass on a few years, and then look in upon that family circle. The discipline which made it a scene of order and harmony has given place to indulgence. The tone of authority which commanded respect is no longer heard; helpless entreaty only stimulates rebellion, and children unrestrained must necessarily rule, while parents sit and smile in hopeless impotency at the vices and follies which they want the force and the energy to correct.

That this discipline, or rather want of discipline, at home, in the case of James, had a great influence in giving tone to his character, we cannot doubt. It led him in the first place to habits of self-reliance, to depend, too

implicitly perhaps, on the suggestions of his own mind and heart, without regard to the experience of others, and thus rendered him liable to a charge of rashness, in nearly all his undertakings, to the very close of his life. To conservative minds he seemed destitute of caution, rushing into the ministry without preparation, and before he was nineteen years of age — immediately challenging the champions of popular theology to a public discussion of the doctrine of endless misery — marrying before he was twenty-one — without capital embarking in the publication of a weekly religious journal — penetrating into the depths of New England to find in one of her largest capitals a field of labor — shrinking not from the presence of obstacles that had made ordinary minds hesitate — accomplishing there what few would have dared to attempt — leaving at the very moment when all his friends decided that he ought to remain, and accepting a still more prominent position in the denomination, where he aroused to life and zeal a somewhat discouraged band of believers, and then seemingly hastening to his *home in heaven.* But notwithstanding this apparent rashness, his devotion to the right saved him from serious evils. His hearers generally thought him prepared for the work of an evangelist and pastor. In debate he never granted to an opponent the boon of victory. As a husband and father, he was kind, affectionate, and excessively indulgent. As a publisher, he was enterprising and successful, constantly improving his sheet in appearance and matter, and rapidly increasing the number of his patrons. In Providence and in Baltimore, he entered upon his duties with an humble confidence in the sustain-

ing mercy of God, and "the desert," under his assiduous culture, "blossomed as the rose."

Another aspect of his character was doubtless more remotely connected with this same laxity of parental discipline. Accustomed, as he was, from early life to govern himself, he always submitted to the dictation of others, *if at all*, with the most ill-concealed reluctance. He could not patiently brook control. He could be reasoned with, his course could be easily influenced by kindness — by the generous appeals of friendship; but he had never learned the virtue of obedience to the whims and caprices of his equals. There must be virtue in the rule which his brethren in the ministry presented for the regulation of his conduct; that virtue *alone* must urge its claims, else it either failed to arrest his attention, or only provoked his contempt. No deference for reputed superiority moved him to acts of self-abasement. Capable of appreciating real greatness, and willing to pay it sincere homage, he despised all affectation, and with great discrimination marked for rebuke those who, without any remarkable claims to distinction, would fain be thought "greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

The associations of his childhood were much the same as those which in that day fell to the lot of a country boy. He was quite a favorite in the family circle, and was kindly regarded by his schoolmates and teachers. With an extraordinary flow of animal spirits, and kind in his manner, he readily won the esteem of affectionate natures, and seldom alienated a friend that once recognized his claims to regard. Without any pretensions to superior rank, or any *apparent* aspirations to be greatest

among his associates, he was usually, by their election, promoted to a leadership in their sports; a leadership which, however gratifying to his childish ambition, he never seemed to covet. He was captain at the mimic parade, leader of the stage exhibition, and preacher in the family circle.

By nature largely endowed with the social element, which element was developed under such genial influences, he seems to have been preëminently qualified to enter society, to enjoy intercourse with it, to excuse and palliate its faults, to encourage its highest virtues, and to find true and exalted felicity in its active and generous sympathies. This will appear obvious to the reader as we proceed with the story of his life.

To great native force of character, which he early displayed, was added a somewhat lofty ambition, the elements of which were also visible in early life — an ambition which was at first matured by the indulgence of parents, and by the partiality of family and associates, and subsequently by the degree of success which crowned all the more important enterprises of his life.

My brother was never remarkable for his scholarship. The common school system in New York had not attained that degree of excellence in 1830, which now characterizes its operations. Schools were then taught by persons laying no great claims to literary attainments: in the summer by young women who had made some proficiency in reading, writing and spelling, and who, if they were eminent, had acquired some knowledge of arithmetic, geography, and English grammar; and in the winter by men who were anxious to turn their otherwise unemployed

hours to some pecuniary account — by men who, having gathered in the harvest of the field, and "done up the work of the season," preferred *learning* by teaching, to the dominion of ignorance, and, more worthy still, the *results* of teaching to the bread of idleness. Among these were some apt to teach, and successful in their vocation. But there were others who sought the office of a teacher as a pecuniary speculation, rather than to gratify any literary tastes which the office would seem to imply. These, coming from the sterner duties of life, were seldom charged with *polishing* too much. Accustomed, as they were, in their *legitimate* vocations in the fields, to the use of the ox-goad and the horse-whip, they (never dreaming that children could be governed by any other influences) usually brought with them, on the first day of their appearance in the school-room, these significant badges of authority; and, to prevent any disastrous consequences to their returning summer labor through established habits of disuse, they employed these instrumentalities of government with great vigor; thereby quickening the sensibilities of their charge, and impressing upon them, by practical applications, such lessons as (when they too went forth to the furrow) would enable them to speed the motion of a tardy team; and, at the same time, suggesting to them such vague ideas of authority and obedience, of government and loyalty, as these appliances were eminently calculated to suggest.

One teacher, the benefit of whose labors James shared with the rest of the family, never, in fame nor form, faded from his memory. The old district school-house was located on my father's farm, and this teacher had

been selected from an adjacent neighborhood to conduct the winter campaign against the unruly urchins, who, at that season of the year, assembled there for mischief and education. In body and mind he was like another distinguished dignitary, "loosely hung together." He was upwards of six feet in height; and, as if to show how nearly a man can be *divided* — *halved* — and live, he was endowed with a length of legs that always gave him the appearance of standing on stilts. His arms, for length, corresponded with these locomotive forces; and when he seized his long birchen rod, and flourished it in token of his right to rule, or applied it to the back of some mischievous boy who had been engaged in adorning the coat of his master with some significant placard, the most distant spectator in that small room was in imminent danger of sharing these occasional demonstrations of his authority.

This man, after having been employed in the same district for three several winters, boasted to some of his pupils that he knew nothing of English grammar, and coolly appealed to his own position in society as a proof of its utter inutility! If a man could teach school without it, of what avail in the great purposes of life could it be!

Yet this man had many excellent qualities of heart, and in the branches which he taught was not unsuccessful. James became much attached to him, and was a favorite with him. And through life he cherished his name in grateful remembrance, and his *person* among his "*queerest*" recollections.

I give this case, as illustrating to some extent the lite-

rary attainments of his first teachers. That some of them were better qualified for their calling, is by no means denied; but the standard was low.

In such nurseries of education, my brother received its first rudiments, making very little progress until after he was eleven years of age. At home, the straitened circumstances of the family, prevented much attention to his improvement on the part of his parents, and, consequently, depending solely on school facilities, little was achieved.

Such are some of the influences of a social and educational character under which the journey of life, with him, was commenced.

There are circumstances, prophetic in their nature, and connected with this period of his life, which deserve a brief notice here. We have said that James was the preacher in the family circle. In the summer of 1823, an infant brother, after a protracted sickness, passed hence to the better world. At the funeral, the Rev. Isaac Whitnall, an eccentric but worthy minister of our order, officiated. Though but a child himself, James was an attentive listener. He noticed the appearance of the preacher in reading, in prayer, and in preaching. The discourse was full of consolation, and delivered with touching pathos. The bereaved parents felt its power, and for a time their tears ceased to flow. The solemnities at the house were closed, the family, with their precious charge, accompanied by many friends, repaired to the grave, committed the "dust to dust," and returned home to mourn their loss. It would seem that this child had noticed the effect of the discourse in

soothing the feelings of his mother, and when, afterwards, he saw her give way to her grief, in tears, he more than once proposed to preach to her. And often did he gather around him his brothers and associates, and with great gravity go through the forms of devotion which he observed at this funeral. At such times he could tolerate no lightness of manner among his auditors. If the imperfection of his speech, or the tones of his voice, always raised to the highest pitch, provoked a smile, the offender was visited with demonstrations of displeasure which he could not soon forget. In recurring to these scenes, with an air of satisfaction, he always congratulated himself on the order which he maintained in these "primary meetings."

His somnambulism also dates from this period. Frequently, when a child, he would leap from his bed, plant himself on the floor in an erect posture, and commence some stirring harangue on topics that had engaged his thoughts when awake. At such times, he usually displayed more vigor of thought, and more force and propriety of expression, than ordinarily characterized his waking efforts.

How true it is that "coming events cast their shadows before."

CHAPTER IV.

REMOVAL — NEW INFLUENCES.

In the spring of 1829, the father of Mr. Cook, having sold his farm and committed his manufacturing business to the hands of his second son, removed with his family to another section of the town of Marcellus, for the purpose of settling with greater expedition an estate of which he was administrator, and which belonged to the heirs of his brother-in-law. This new residence was located in a most beautiful valley. The hill-side, forming the southern boundary of the valley, was covered with a dense forest, unbroken, as yet, by the woodman's axe. To the south-west of our humble dwelling, a little clearing had been made, whether the more effectually to disclose to the inhabitants of the vale the glories of autumnal sunsets, or as an opening to the regions of civilization on the hill-country above, I will not now pretend to say. On the north, the primal forest had gradually yielded to the demand for fuel and for lumber, and the soil, once crowned with its majestic grandeur, now shot forth the most luxuriant "thickets," which, when clothed in verdure, were most enchanting to behold. At the east, the valley gradually widened; the hills were less

rugged, and the landscape, in this direction, adorned, at the period of our removal thither, with orchards blossoming for fruit, and patches of woodland, scattered here and there, putting on their livery of green, presented to the admirer of nature a scene of unsurpassed beauty and loveliness. Through this valley meandered a most charming stream, gradually swelling, as it passed along, from the contributions of various little springs and rivulets, issuing from the hill-sides, until, a few miles distant, its waters were applied to mechanical purposes, and served the convenience and comfort of the inhabitants. In this stream sported the speckled trout; and on its banks the subject of this memoir spent many hours, more for amusement than for profit, in the somewhat exciting employment of angling. Who, that then observed the animated features of the boy, thus engaged, — the indications of joy which success diffused over his countenance, — read his destiny, or foresaw those developments of divine Providence which eventually made him a "fisher of men?"

But what a mighty influence there is in a name! This spot, so beautiful, so charming to the lover of landscapes, was repulsive to his young heart, from the shadow resting upon it — the shadow of its name! It is ever with a struggle that one with strong local attachments breaks up the associations of childhood, bids adieu to the only spot ever regarded as *home* — to schoolmates and friends, and goes forth to other scenes. But there is often a compensation for such sacrifices, which serves to moderate and diminish the period of regret, in the novelty of a new residence, and in the excitement of new asso-

ciations. It was not so, however, in the case of this child of strange caprices — PUMPKIN HOLLOW had no charms for him! It mattered not that he had never seen it. The strange auguries of its name engrossed his young heart, filled his imaginative mind with prejudices, and for a time disqualified him for enjoyment in his new place of abode.

Duty with its toils, however, readily opens the heart to a sense of the beauties which surround it, and elevates the mind above those groundless prejudices which alienate the affections from the works of God. It had this beneficial effect upon James. Actively engaged from day to day, he soon learned to love his new home.

In this place, he formed many strong attachments — friendships that were only terminated by his death. He became deeply interested in his books, and began to pride himself on his scholarship. As the years of his sojourn passed, and the circle of his acquaintance was enlarged, he was the recipient of many favors, which the partiality of his friends conferred, and he richly enjoyed. In summer on the farm, in winter at school, his physical and mental energies were harmoniously developed; and he seemed to enjoy his labors and his studies alike.

His religious experience, so far as known to the writer, dates from this period. During his residence in the Hollow, his mind was considerably exercised on subjects pertaining to the kingdom of heaven. Brought up in the belief of God's impartial grace and salvation, he had nought in his early religious impressions to make him unhappy. I do not think his mind had, at this time, been specially directed to the fundamental doctrines of the

Gospel, as understood by Universalists; but the general tone of religious instruction which had been given him was calculated to inspire confidence in God as a Father and Saviour. This certainly was the case so far as parental influence was exerted to mould his conceptions of the divine character. But, amidst religious excitements, which prevailed in the neighborhood, and in the absence of any direct doctrinal teaching calculated to establish his faith in the great salvation, he seems occasionally to have been affected by the dark and gloomy suggestions of modern orthodoxy — especially by the fear which it is eminently calculated to awaken in hearts of enlarged and refined sympathies. And to this experience he not unfrequently referred in his public labors.

It is not always an easy matter to account for the origin of early impressions — impressions which affect our peace in subsequent life. And hence we are very liable to err when we make the attempt. I think my brother erred in ascribing the apprehensions of future and endless woe, awakened in his mind, at this period of his life, to the instructions of his mother; erred under the impression that she had not yet come to a full understanding of the plan of salvation revealed in the Gospel. In this he doubtless confounded influences, and ascribed to her what was due alone to the associations of his childhood. Among the earliest memories of that sainted mother, which the writer cherishes, are the utterances of joy she experienced while listening to the word of truth as preached by those faithful servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, Revs. Isaac Whitnal, Stephen R. Smith, J. S. Flagler and William I. Reese. Nor can I forget the

expressions of delight which the receipt of the religious journal — the Gospel Advocate, and afterwards the Magazine and Advocate (devoted to the illustration and defence of Universalism) — ever called forth from her heart. It was always greeted as a messenger of peace and glad tidings. And I know that, long before the period here referred to, she embraced the doctrine of universal salvation, and rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory in its blessed assurances.

It is true, as I have already intimated, that in childhood my mother was taught the stern dogmas of Calvinism; and she did not obtain complete deliverance from the bondage thus imposed upon the spirit until after she was surrounded by a family. But this deliverance came before his mind was capable of receiving any lasting impressions; and from her lips he received no word of instruction calculated to throw a shade over the loveliness of the divine character, or to diminish the confidence of his children in the boundless love of the everlasting Father.

But there were influences brought to bear upon his "impressible" spirit, which, originating not at home, but from a different quarter, were well calculated to awaken the emotions which he so feelingly described in his public labors, while giving his religious experience. It was about this time that what were then called "Four days' meetings," and subsequently "Protracted meetings," began to afflict humanity, and to desolate the church. One of these meetings was held in the neighborhood. A large barn was opened for the accommodation of its projectors, and the public flocked to witness

the wild and fanatical operations of those engaged in conducting it. The preaching consisted, for the most part, of flaming descriptions of the wrath of God and the torments of hell, with an occasional word of hope, calculated to soothe the fears which the general strain was designed to awaken in timid hearts. And then nearly all the preaching he heard, during his residence of several years in this place, was of a similar stamp — was an appeal to sinners to flee from the wrath to come — to escape hell and get to heaven. His associates, out of the family circle, regarded this style of preaching as eminently Christian, were at times made miserable by it, and his strong sympathies naturally led him to share their tormenting doubts and fears.

But these influences, after all, did not lead him to adopt the popular theology as a system of faith. Some vague notions of its truthfulness may have haunted him at times, may have robbed him of peace, but he had no settled convictions pointing to the ultimate results of the divine government which this theology suggests. His first impressions, derived from parental instruction, did not long yield to the dominion of his sympathetic doubts and wretchedness, but speedily triumphed, and restored him to his usual cheerfulness and hope. Now came his resolution to search the Scriptures — to make himself familiar with their teachings, and to compare the theories of man with the great and glorious truths therein revealed. He supplied himself with a pocket Bible, which was his daily companion. He carried it with him to the field and to the school-house. He studied it at the intervals of labor, and at the recess of his school hours. He

committed to memory nearly all its controverted texts, supposed to refer to the final destiny of man. He could turn to chapter and verse with wonderful facility, and before he was fifteen years of age, he was not unfrequently engaged in defending the doctrine which he afterwards preached, and laboring to show to unbelievers its beautiful harmony with the divine character and purposes, as revealed in the mission, teachings, and cross of Christ. As this doctrine was not generally understood by those who most violently denounced it as "a device of the devil," he had no difficulty in starting queries, which confounded its adversaries, long before he could give a reason entirely satisfactory to himself for the hope he had so long cherished.

The last winter he spent in the Hollow, he became very much interested in his studies at school. Warmly attached to his teacher, and happy in his intercourse with the pupils, he advanced rapidly in a knowledge of the several branches which he pursued,— spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and English grammar,— and at the conclusion of the term he had the satisfaction of standing at the head of his class.

It was while connected with this school that James became instrumental in establishing among the pupils a *debating society*, for mutual improvement. Like most other institutions of the kind belonging to that day in the State of New York, and like many of the lyceums in New England at the present day, this juvenile debating society tolerated the discussion of "no political or sectarian question." These questions were proscribed on the ground that the discussion would only embitter

party prejudices, and thus tend to the dissolution of the society. "So strong and inflexible are political and religious prepossessions, even in childhood," it was gravely argued by gray-haired men, "that once excited by debate, all the ordinary ties of friendship must yield to their withering and desolating power; and then, all hope of mutual improvement is delusive and vain." The same proscriptive measures are usually adopted in the organization of debating societies and lyceums at the present day. Questions of the character named are excluded by constitutional provisions, and hence the field of inquiry is limited to questions in which the masses take comparatively little interest. In this country, all men are supposed to be politicians, and to feel an interest in understanding the great questions at issue between the rival parties. And if these questions are proscribed, and abstract or metaphysical questions, interesting only to a few minds peculiarly constituted, or questions of a purely moral character, in which nearly all agree, are exclusively discussed, the permanent support of debating societies cannot be looked for with any good degree of confidence.

The same remarks apply with equal, if not greater force, to questions at issue between the various sects in Christendom, and especially to that greatest of all questions — *the final destiny of the human race.* There is of necessity an interest, a personal interest, in this question. With an all-pervading presentiment of a future life, men earnestly desire to know whether that life is to be one of happiness or misery. And a topic of such absorbing interest should claim the attention of

the young, in all their associations for mental and moral improvement. Let them be encouraged to investigate it, not as the bigoted devotees of a creed, but as children of God, desiring to know the purposes of the Father. Exclude it from the lyceum and the debating society,— say, for the purpose of excluding it, that it is too profound for the young, too exciting for the old, that it belongs exclusively to the pulpit and to the religious press, that its discussion will inevitably destroy the harmony and peril the existence of the association which tolerates it,— and you rob these institutions of their vitality, and leave them a mere body without a spirit. The young will soon turn away from them.

But to return from this digression, already too long, I will add, in conclusion of this chapter, that the efforts of James in this debating society were not very satisfactory to himself. As he reviewed them in after life,— as he considered his *vain attempts* to connect and express his ideas, as he recalled his awkward appearance on the floor, as he listened to the echoes of his *labored* or rather *laboring* eloquence, which consisted of a struggling silence, broken occasionally by words of no particular significance, save of his mortifying embarrassment,— he would start with a sort of convulsive energy, and exclaim, with characteristic force, "*That oratory!*" Still, in his mortification he usually consoled himself with the reflection that had his favorite theme — the scripture doctrine concerning the final destiny of man — been the subject of debate, he might have acquitted himself with more honor, and given a far more

hopeful promise of future usefulness, than this first effort conferred or indicated. And in after life, he could solace his wounded pride with assurances that he was not the only orator that failed in his first attempt at public speaking.

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER CHANGE.

My father, having accomplished the object contemplated in his removal to the Hollow, having settled the estate and secured a division of the property among the heirs, with his family bade adieu to their temporary home, and purchased an estate in the town of Van Buren, Onondaga county. This estate consisted of about two acres of land, on which there were three structures, — a grist mill, distillery, and dwelling-house; and, as an appurtenance belonging to it, there was a water power sufficient for the ordinary purposes of the mill. For the greater convenience of the family, a new dwelling-house was projected, and some progress was made in its erection. But the work was delayed; the winter approached, and the family decided to move into the house before it was completed. They did so about Christmas, 1833.

James entered the district school, which, at that time, was taught by a gentleman of great moral worth, by the name of Edward Edmunds. Possessing a most amiable disposition, a large share of "common sense," refined by education, and of a deeply religious turn of mind, he very soon acquired the confidence and affection of

his pupil, and, through these sentiments, exerted a very salutary influence upon his habits of thought, and purposes of life.

Mr. Edmunds was, at this time, preparing himself for the ministry, and had occasionally preached as a licentiate among the sect calling themselves Christians. He was ardently devoted to the peculiar sentiments of that body, and was fond of discussing the merits of his own views. He honestly regarded the doctrine of universal salvation as a great and dangerous error; a theological dogma, conceived in the benevolence or selfishness of the human heart, and finding no warrant either in reason or the word of God. James, on the other hand, had already satisfied himself that the Bible did not teach the endless duration of punishment for the sins of this life; and he lost no convenient opportunity to engage his teacher in a defence of this doctrine. Placing himself more in the attitude of an inquirer than of a disputant, he propounded questions which elicited discussion, and such discussion at times as convinced him of his weakness, and sent him back to his Bible with a stronger desire to know its importance, especially the significance of its promises and threatenings, than he had hitherto cherished. At such times there seemed to be a cloud hovering over his soul — former impressions gave additional weight to the arguments of his opponent — he desired to know if these impressions, or his more recent convictions, were to be trusted; and, in his yearnings for wisdom, for light to conduct him into the truth as it is in Jesus, he had occasion to test the efficacy of prayer. Even at this early day, he gave himself, as he has often said, to this

exercise, with that earnestness of spirit which characterized all his devotions. He satisfied himself that men must pray, as well as think, if they would understand the word of truth. Not the intellectual — exclusively intellectual — but the devout, the spiritual, "discern the things of God." The heart must be open to the sweet and heavenly influences of the life of Christ, or his words will accomplish but little for the enlightenment of our minds. Actuated by these convictions, he became a prayerful student of the Bible.

In this spirit, reviewing the passages that had been quoted by his teacher to undermine his faith, he usually returned to the contest "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." Whatever success, in these efforts, may have seemed to crown his endeavors to sustain the doctrine which he was ready to believe as the truth of God — however regarded by his teacher and friend, they were evidently of great service to himself. They stimulated him to a more careful investigation of the divine word, to weigh well its sacred testimonies, and to form to himself a system of faith which all his subsequent studies in the same direction served but to commend and sanction. During this winter, I was engaged in teaching school in the town of Mentz, Cayuga county, N. Y., and, at the expiration of the winter term, returned home to spend a few weeks with the family. Scarcely had I arrived, ere an invitation was given to Mr. E. to meet me, at my father's house, and there, in the presence of such as might gather for the purpose of hearing, discuss the merits of our respective views. Mr. E. very cheerfully accepted the invitation of his pupil, and came at

the appointed time, accompanied by a young man somewhat noted for his *precocity*, and quite popular in that neighborhood, as a preacher of the Christian order. This was the Rev. E. G. H.— a man of considerable talent and more vanity; a man, by the way, who has since boasted of great victories achieved in controversy with the advocates of Universalism, and more recently challenged the admiration of the literary world as a critic and reviewer. A recent call from him served to convince me that the vanity of his youth had assumed a chronic form in maturer age; and from the testimony of his friend E——, whom I afterwards met, I gathered that it was in danger of betraying him into a renegade movement towards a more popular sect in Boston than had praised his youthful efforts in New York. Whether the apprehensions of his friend were ever verified or not, and if so, what reception he met with among his coveted patrons, I have never learned.

The conversation with Mr. E. was commenced, and continued for several hours, in a very friendly mood; and resulted, as most such conversations do, in confirming the parties to it in their previous convictions, and deepening their respective prejudices against the sentiments opposed. But one who listened seemed differently affected. Champions seldom yield the palm of victory; but auditors are usually less interested, and consequently more impartial judges. And, from this hour, James felt a degree of confidence in Universalism, which no opposition could ever shake. Explanations of controverted texts were suggested, which his mind readily seized upon and his heart approved. Some doubts that lingered in

his soul now gave place to faith, and, from the depths of his spiritual being, there came a voice, pointing to the future, and reiterating the words, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel."

In this conversation the teacher, then, and his associate, the preacher, displaying their respective characters, presented such a striking contrast in their habits of thought, their Christian culture, and in their purposes of life, that James became more than ever interested in the former, and disgusted with the latter. Mr. E. seemed only desirous of convincing Universalists of their error, and Mr. H. only desirous of convincing all with whom he associated of *his error*, namely, that he was a great man. The former ever treated the subject of these pages with great kindness and consideration; and when, in after years, Providence assigned him and the writer contiguous fields of labor, and they were associated in the ministry of Boston, he spoke of his former pupil with affectionate regard, and mourned his early decease with the tenderness of a friend indeed.

Under the instructions of Mr. E., James made a very commendable proficiency in his studies. Having arrived at an age when he began to feel more sensibly the importance of education, and the necessity of improving the time allotted him from the pressing demands of labor, he applied himself with great diligence, and found his reward in the progress which he made.

Even at this age, as we have before intimated, he began to lay his plans for life. His first object was to qualify himself for the important duties of a teacher of a common school. In this vocation he proposed to spend

a few years, and then to *consecrate his life to the work of the ministry.* To this end he gave himself to his books with increasing interest, while under instruction; and after the term of his school had closed, and he was engaged with an older brother in the distillery, his leisure moments were given to his studies, to his Bible, and to meditations upon the character of God.

In the autumn of 1834, my father was attacked with inflammatory rheumatism, and was, in consequence thereof, for several months confined to his house. He was too poor to employ a man to take charge of his business, and consequently great responsibilities devolved upon James. He was charged with the duty of purchasing grain and wood for the distillery, and of disposing of the products of the same. He was thus providentially brought into contact with business men. Nor did he neglect to study their characters. He not only heard their words, but read their actions. At first, with all the confidence of a child, he went forth believing all men honest; but his confidence waned as his acquaintance with the world was extended. After having been imposed upon several times, where his extreme youth should have proved his protection, his suspicions were aroused, and he resolved to look more critically than ever before into the conduct of men with whom he dealt. He suffered no attempt at fraud to pass unrebuked if detected, and none to succeed unless adroitly managed. Such attempts usually made such a strong appeal to his keen sense of the ridiculous, that in reporting them he never failed to convulse his hearers with laughter.

And yet, when he withdrew from the cares of busi-

ness, and accustomed himself to meditate upon the human soul, as bearing the impress of its Author; when he looked upon it in the clear light of the Gospel, his experience relating to the corruptions of trade seems to have faded from his memory; his confidence was restored and enlarged, and with a generous heart he hoped all things of the children of God.

My father's health continued to decline, and in the month of June, 1836, acting on the advice of his physician, he resolved to test the medicinal virtues of the famous waters of Saratoga. The undertaking was a great one. For thirty years he had confined himself to the narrow sphere to which his business was limited; and these thirty years had been spent, for the most part, in the enjoyment of health and in devotion to toil. But now, with his physical energies prostrated, his spirits depressed, and with the vital spark faintly flickering amidst the shadows of the grave, as his last hope, accompanied by his companion, he feels compelled to go forth in pursuit of health — to seek it at the very place where thousands annually go to sacrifice it in fashionable frolics and the most detestable dissipation. He had become too feeble to walk without assistance, too hopeless of life's future to be cheerful, and withal too poor to seek anything more for himself and wife at this fashionable resort than the humblest accommodations. Undaunted by these untoward influences, they set out together. The writer, obtaining leave of absence from his charge, went on in advance, "to prepare a place for" them; and when they arrived, he had the satisfaction of conducting them to very comfortable quarters, and engaging in their behalf the services and sympathies of very kind friends.

The whole family was deeply affected by their departure. It seemed like a final separation on earth from those most tenderly loved. But it was never the habit of James to sit down in moody despair. Even at that early age he was wont to seek relief from depression of spirits by devising some means of good to those he loved. He cast about for something to do in the absence of his parents, which, if accomplished on their return, would meet their approval, and at the same time be of service to their health.

I have said that the family moved into their dwelling-house before it was completed — I might have said, *almost as soon as it was enclosed.* It was raised on piers to its destined elevation, and left a bare shell, with rude partitions to mark its different apartments. After the first pang of separation, he cherished the hope that this journey might prove beneficial to the health of his father, and that he would return to occupy for months, if not for years, this house. He felt most painfully that it was wholly unsuited to one in his feeble condition. Consequently a field of benevolent operation was open before him; and he entered it, determined to do a work that should at once command the approval and promote the comfort of his invalid parent. And so rapid were all his movements, that in a very few days after he had received his parting benediction, workmen were to be seen in every direction on the premises, moving obsequious to the will of this juvenile contractor. He had infused his own energy into all hands, and the speedy accomplishment of his purposes was the *one* desire which actuated all. Stones for the foundation, quarried at a dis-

tance of several miles, appeared on the spot as if by magic; masons, with an air of haste marked on every feature, were adjusting them in the wall with all possible despatch; and joiners, sympathizing in the purposes of a speedy consummation, receiving their orders from the beardless boy, executed them with an energy truly astonishing to all the gossiping neighbors. The movement did not meet the approval of an older brother. It was calculated to divert capital from the business, very much needed there, and he used his influence to dissuade the workmen from the fulfilment of their contract. But in vain. Bearing down all opposition by the force of his own character, and the influence which he had acquired with the workmen, he showed himself more than a match for superior age. In less than four weeks from the time he was left in charge, besides attending to all the ordinary business devolving upon him in providing for and disposing of the products of the distillery, he had the satisfaction of seeing the work completed, and ready for the reception of his parents.

On their return they were greatly moved by the change in the aspects of their home; and although it had been wrought at considerable pecuniary expense, which at that time he could ill afford, the father could not withhold the meed of praise from the motives of his son; nor did he upbraid him with charges of rashness in the undertaking. Thus sustained, James was content to labor for the payment of those whom he had employed.

In the providence of God we are struck with evidences of the fact that from seeming evil he often educes good. We think we trace, in no small degree, the earn-

estness with which he subsequently advocated the cause of temperance to the memories of his experience during this portion of his eventful life. His employment was far from being suited to his tastes, or to his habits of thought. When his father engaged in it, few men had ever insinuated that it was any more disreputable than any other calling. His all was now embarked in it, his health was gone, and James felt that, under the circumstances, filial piety demanded at his hands a surrender of his own scruples, and fidelity to the business. He managed, however, to find time nearly every day to read his Bible, to compare its testimonies, and to discipline his mind for the defence of its doctrines. If at times his employment surrounded him with associations not the most grateful to his moral sentiments, instead of yielding to the corrupting influence of such associations, he improved the opportunities thus afforded to study character, and to familiarize himself with the motives of human conduct. And, as a public teacher, he evinced a most intimate acquaintance with the heart of man, both with those blind impulses which predispose it to folly and vice, and with those moral sentiments and religious faculties which lift it up to God.

CHAPTER VI.

SCHOOL AND SCHOOL TEACHING.

In the summer of 1835, in the seventeenth year of his age, my brother embraced an opportunity, afforded him from the cares of business, to enter the academy at Elbridge, which at that time was considered one of the best institutions of the kind in Onondaga county. Here he pursued the ordinary branches usually taught in the common schools, and also natural philosophy, history, and algebra. In the last of these he made but little progress, and abandoned his algebra as soon as he left the academy. Here he remained but a short time, but long enough to acquire the reputation of a most industrious and persevering student.

Having mastered the studies which he pursued with special reference to the office of a teacher, he was very anxious to test his skill in this capacity — anxious to make a practical application of his acquirements. He accordingly applied for a situation as teacher in a district lying some three miles from his father's residence. The pupils of this school were, for the most part, children of farmers with whom he had had business transactions; and the trustees did not hesitate to negotiate a winter's engagement with him. Leaving the academy in October,

he entered upon his duties as teacher in 1835. He was not yet seventeen years of age, but somewhat precocious; he was generally supposed to be about twenty. Fearing that a knowledge of his age might prejudice the minds of his older pupils against his discipline, he took no special pains to disclose it to them. When inquired of concerning it, he usually answered with an air of indifference, "Old enough to be much better than I am."

With this school he commenced what he terms a journal or diary, a daily record of important incidents. Some of these are not very flattering to the intellectual developments of his charge. One young man, who had spent two terms at the Elbridge academy, and who, on entering his school, proposed to study English grammar, is described as a literary *booby*, with all the "fixins" appertaining to such a character. This journal, however, was continued but for a short time. It serves to exhibit the feelings which he experienced during the first few weeks of his labors, the cheerfulness with which he met difficulties, and his success in establishing his claims to the confidence of his pupils. By the native force of his character he very soon acquired an influence over the school which few of his predecessors had ever enjoyed, and before the close of a five months' term he became not a little celebrated as a *disciplinarian and teacher* in the region round about.

"Boarding around," as the phrase was, among the patrons of his school, according to the custom of those days in New York, — a custom, by the way, not yet abandoned, — he was very naturally attracted to certain points of the district, to favorite family circles, in which

he felt himself more at home than in some others. In one such family he became deeply interested. The kindness of the parents and the sympathy of the children had made it a most desirable place of resort. A son and daughter, of nearly his own age, were objects of his particular regard. They were not only his pupils, but, in sentiment and conduct, brother and sister.

At length the young man was attacked with a fatal disease, lingered a few days, and died. This unexpected event cast a deep gloom not only over the whole school, but the entire neighborhood — over none more than the youthful teacher. James was deeply affected by it.

In rural districts, in case of death in a family, it is the custom to invite in some of the neighbors to "watch with the corpse." Several companions of the deceased had been engaged for this service, and they, with one accord, turned to their teacher to accompany them. They knew his warm attachment to the departed, and erroneously but innocently judged that he would readily discharge this melancholy duty, as a tribute of respect to his memory. But the truth is, no child had a greater horror of death — of its sensible presence — than had he. If he but looked upon its cold victim, the image of those ghastly features would haunt his mind for days and weeks together; and when alone in the night, they would rise up before him with overpowering terrors. This was the case long after the commencement of his ministerial labors, and when his official relations made him familiar with scenes of death and mourning. At funerals, in the discharge of the most solemn functions of his office, he never

coveted, but rather turned away from, the sight of a corpse.

But here was an appeal to his respect for the memory of a pupil, a friend, a brother. How could he decline the service which the desire of other pupils seemed to demand at his hands? There were in his mind many considerations to excuse him. Not the least of these was the fact that the deceased was a particular friend (the very ground on which his services had been claimed), his features were familiar to him, and he would remember these features as he last saw them in health. In vain, however, did he plead to be excused. With great reluctance he consented to form one of the number to keep the solemn vigil by that lifeless form.

In the evening he repaired to the house, now darkened for the first time with the shadow of death, which previously possessed so many charms for his heart. He found there a mournful group, composed mostly of friends and associates of the sister. And ere the hour of midnight arrived, he found himself the only male watcher present, and he was wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement by the dread presence. All was silent without, save the March winds which swept mournfully by; and every sound which it awakened seemed to him to be followed by a thousand echoes through the house. The hours wore on, and silence, which reigned in that sad circle with most oppressive sway, was at length broken by one of the number, who proposed to visit the room where lay the unconscious sleeper, partly as a duty to the dead, and partly to assure themselves that the mournful sounds, which ever and anon greeted their ears, pro-

ceeded not from that apartment. No proposition could have been more ungrateful to James; but concealing his emotions as best he could, he consented to follow, rather than lead his less timid companions on their errand of duty.

The corpse had not yet been placed in a coffin, but was lying upon a board supported by a couple of chairs. By some misstep the bearer of the light stumbled near the threshold of the door, and falling against the chair at the foot of the corpse, displaced the board, and its burden was in an instant precipitated to the floor. One general cry of terror arose, and in the confusion the light was extinguished. Every one now seized upon the frightened boy for protection, and with great unanimity set up the cry, fearfully suggestive, "Is he alive? *Is* he alive?"

To this scene he often referred in maturer years, as one of the most exciting of his whole life, and as an evidence of that refined barbarism which delights in the recital of ghost and hobgoblin stories to the young — stories which but too often invest death in the most horrid terrors.

After a few moments, the company so far recovered their senses as to enable them to relight their extinguished candle; the corpse was restored to the position from which it had fallen, and the watchers were left to meditate on the idleness of their fears.

There is another incident connected with the decease of this young man, which, as exhibiting the state of his mind in early life, on the subject of death, may not be unacceptable to the reader. A few weeks after the close

of his school, and James had resumed his duties at home, he visited this bereaved family with the view of spending a social evening with them. Busy in conversation, the hours passed rapidly, and it was late before he thought of starting for home. The death of his friend had engaged attention, and was *the* topic of conversation. Every allusion to it recalled the horrors of that memorable night when he watched with the corpse. At length he became very nervous, and as the moments sped, and he felt that it was time to take his leave, he was seen to approach the window with hasty steps, gaze with anxious eyes upon the *outer darkness*, and then to glide back to the circle from which he both longed and dreaded to be absent. The parents, mistaking his motives, retired from the room, and left him alone with the daughter. But this only increased his embarrassment, and made him the more anxious to be gone. Especially was this his feeling when the conversation turned upon the place where the remains of the departed were deposited, the place of his burial. This was along the roadside which he must travel in reaching home.

It was now midnight. The heavens were overcast, and all things favored the most dreadful apprehensions on the part of one agitated by his fears. "If ever ghosts have sought communion or companionship with the living, at this hour they may renew their endeavors." Thus he reasoned, and lingered on the final farewell. But strength was given him; with ill concealed agitation he said "good night," the door closed upon him, and he rushed into the darkness to meet his fate. He walked rapidly towards home. Every step brought him

nearer to the spot which of all others he most dreaded to pass. At length, knowing himself to be in the immediate vicinity of the grave-yard, he felt a sinking sensation at the heart, his knees trembled, the perspiration started at every pore, and he queried whether it was best to proceed or turn back. But on he went.

Directly opposite the grave-yard was an orchard, and the branches of the trees hung over the fence, and in summer graciously shaded the footman's path. His course lay as near these trees as the intervening fence would permit, nearer than was profitable for his broadcloth on such a damp night, but he worried on and got past the grave.

Those who believe in ghosts, or who did believe in them in childhood, or even those whose fancies have conjured up the dead, know that just at this point is the greatest trial of nerve. To *meet* a ghost face to face is something; but to be chased by one — to feel a chill coursing up and down the spine, and fancy that it is a sort of electrical current, eliminated from the shadowy hand of some dreaded spectre — this, this is torture! He felt it, and quickening his pace at this very moment from a cautious walk to a gentle run, his hat struck the branch of a tree, and thus disturbed the quiet slumbers of a *guinea hen* perched upon it. A frightful scream from the frightened fowl ensued. His fears readily tortured the sound into a ghostly salutation, and he failed not to make good his retreat. The fence which he had followed so closely suddenly terminated in the centre of a log house, leaving one half of the said house in the field, and the other projecting into the highway. The

entrance to the house was near the fence, and directly in the course he was pursuing. When at the height of his greatest speed, he came in contact with the door, which, from the momentum he had acquired, he carried before him "as a very little thing," and landed it with himself on the opposite side of the room. An explosion of his pent up horrors instantly followed; he gave utterance to a most unearthly screech at the very top of his voice. This, with its portentous preliminaries, brought to their feet the venerable pair that for many years had occupied that humble dwelling; who, thus suddenly startled from peaceful sleep, echoed and reëchoed the fearful salutation they had received, and finally demanded an explanation of the intruder, whether he was a robber, or (as the pious lady suggested) an angel sent to announce the judgment day!

An explanation followed; apologies were made, pardon was solicited, old acquaintance was renewed, and, declining an invitation to remain over night, James, mortified by this exhibition of his folly, started for his home, fully determined never again to run from the misty and unsubstantial conjurations of his own brain.

Under the influence of the most vivid recollections of that ludicrous and yet most painful experience, he related to the writer, during one of our last interviews in Providence, this incident, with a force of eloquence which the above sketch but feebly represents.

Having completed his first trial term as teacher with credit to himself, he resumed his studies in the spring, and pursued them with unabated zeal until the ensuing autumn. At this time, the reputation which he gained as

teacher the previous winter secured for him an invitation to take charge of the principal school in the beautiful village of Camillus, some three miles distant from his former location. Here he continued for two terms (winter and summer), and then abandoned the service of school teaching for the more important duties of the ministry.

A friend writes us from Camillus, "The pupils of Mr. Cook, with whom I have conversed, speak of him in the highest terms of respect, and many declare that he was decidedly the best teacher ever engaged in the school." Rev. N. Brown, who is familiar with this field of his early labors, thus writes: "Bro. Cook was what might be termed a natural born Universalist. From early childhood he loved Universalism, and endeavored to live the doctrine. For several years before I first saw him, he had been engaged a portion of the time in school teaching. Yet he never felt it his duty to disguise his religious sentiments, or to compromise his independence. He was rarely, if ever, drawn into serious difficulty by this course, though I have been informed that in numerous instances his youthful enthusiasm led him to discuss with his patrons the merits of Universalism with much ardor and ability. He was always successful, however, as a teacher, gave excellent satisfaction wherever he taught, was a great favorite with his scholars, and won numerous warm friends and admirers among all classes and denominations."

We have already said that, on account of his youth, James sometimes evaded questions relating to his age. He did this, not because he was ashamed of his age, but

because he would not unnecessarily prejudice the minds of his pupils against his discipline. "On one occasion, however," writes his widow, "a pious old lady, fond of delineating Scripture characters, was not to be put off with his usual mode of answering that he was 'old enough to be wiser and better than he was,' and therefore pressed her inquiries with an earnestness that demanded an acknowledgment of his youth, or a more *scriptural* evasion. Remembering her passion for exhibiting her knowledge of Bible characters, he turned upon his venerable friend and asked, 'Why, don't you think I look as old as Abner?' Not wishing to betray her ignorance of this personage, so familiar to the record, she answered, 'La, yes! I thought you was as old as Abner. Let me see,—well, O, certainly, Abner was about twenty-two!'"

Thus easily satisfied for the time with a Scripture answer, she never renewed her inquiries respecting his age, but quietly endured the struggles with her curiosity which was evidently kept alive by her failure to ascertain, after many efforts, the age of Abner.

CHAPTER VII.

THE VOICE OF DEATH.

The father of Mr. Cook, after a lingering illness of a most painful character, fell asleep in the arms of Jesus, July 2, 1837. He died as he had lived, in the full assurance of that faith which he had cherished for more than a quarter of a century.

The circumstances of his sickness and death were somewhat peculiar, and well calculated to make a deep and salutary impression on the hearts of his children. For several months previous to his departure, he was almost entirely helpless. All his physical energies seemed to be completely paralyzed. The nerves of the tongue sharing in the general prostration, he was unable to speak intelligibly for several weeks preceding his death. Of course, to those who had known and loved him as he was known and loved by his family, he presented a most melancholy spectacle, a spectacle of utter helplessness. He had been a man of great physical strength. Up to the time when the fatal disease seized upon him, in this respect he recognized few superiors in the whole circle of his acquaintance. He was celebrated for his powerful and commanding voice. But now, what a contrast! Every nerve is paralyzed. He cannot, to

save him from death, command the power to raise a hand or move a foot. His voice is gone. Not an articulate sound can he utter. He talks by signs, which can be interpreted only by her who for thirty years had shared every emotion of his manly heart. Thank God, to the last he is understood!

To one of James' susceptible nature this decline of life, and the death scene which followed, was an influence never to be forgotten. Wherever he was it affected him. Asleep or awake, it colored his thoughts and his dreams, his waking and his somnambulic utterances.

In a letter on the subject of his father's death, James thanks God that he was "moved by some irresistible impulse, at an earlier hour than usual on the day of his decease, to dismiss his school and go home." He thus providentially reached the house in time to be recognized by his father, and to receive his dying benediction — *a smile*. Already was that father satisfied that his hour was come; and, if his countenance was any index to the emotions of the spirit within, he rejoiced in the conviction. Long had that spirit struggled for its emancipation from the fetters of mortality, and now, as it approached the confines of the immortal world, it seemed to catch glimpses of its destined glory, and to rejoice in the prospect of its final deliverance.

James watched the varying aspects of his father's countenance with peculiar interest. Times without number had he been told that "Universalism will never do to die by." Many of the neighbors, given to a repetition of this oft-refuted prediction, were desirous of seeing it verified in his case. With less courtesy than zeal for

God — albeit a zeal which is not according to knowledge — many of the votaries of popular theology had visited him in his sickness, had visited him when every emotion that agitated his bosom shook his feeble frame and found vent only in tears, and, under the pretence of uniting with him in prayer to God for strength to sustain him as he walked through the valley and the shadow of death, had made the most heartless appeals to the prejudices of his childhood; hoping thereby to deprive him of the faith he had cherished in maturer years, and to have the satisfaction of reporting with some show of truth that he had renounced his Universalism on his death-bed. But they had gained nothing. In that perishing casket was enshrined a gem which had lost none of its inherent beauties by its approach to the eternal world. My father never shrunk from death; and now, as the spirit lingered on this side of Jordan, the youthful son watched its visible expressions in the countenance with a look of interest which no words could express. He satisfied himself that the soul was calm and cheerful, waiting the final summons of its great Original with confidence and holy trust.

As before remarked, this death scene had a powerful influence on his mind. It gave him new and better views of death. He felt an unwonted composure in its presence. It also strengthened his faith in Universalism. It removed from his mind one objection to the doctrine, which, having so often heard, perplexed him not a little, and made him desirous of witnessing a case which should test its justice. This was granted him in the death of his father: "For," he reasoned, "if there had been in

his mind a single doubt, or in his heart a single fear, it would inevitably have revealed itself in some involuntary expression of his emotions." The least distress of mind, for weeks before his death, was at once visible. He could no more control his feelings, nor conceal his emotions, than an infant. And, of course, he could not now affect composure, and display, in that truth-telling countenance, all the indications of a spirit at peace, had the fear of death agitated his mind. And thus reasoning, the case was incomparably more satisfactory to him than it could have been, had he simply expressed in words his confidence in Universalism in the hour of death. His own misgivings as to the sustaining power of Universalism in the valley of death were thus providentially removed, and set at rest forever.

He now became more anxious than ever to preach Universalism. Having witnessed the power of faith in its assurances in the case of one so dear to his heart — having seen that one, sustained by its consolations, through a long sickness, patient as tie after tie was loosed from earth, and having satisfied himself that his soul was full of hope, as he walked through the valley and the shadow of death, he felt that it was indeed squandering precious moments that ought to be devoted to the service of his Master, to the proclamation of his truth, to go back to the dull routine of his school. Although he felt it a duty to fulfil his engagement with the district, he longed to be about his "Father's work."

CHAPTER VIII.

SUGGESTIONS OF A JOURNEY.

About the time his engagement with his school ceased, the writer visited home to spend a few days with his widowed mother. He found James worn down with toil no longer grateful to his feelings, and not a little agitated with thoughts of *preparation* for the ministry. A little conversation with him was sufficient to convince any one that he was "in a dilemma." He had fully determined on his profession for life: *he was to preach.* But, though very young, he shrunk with horror from the thought of a very long course of preparatory reading. The truth is, he never had any patience in the work of preparation. His philosophy suggested that "experience is the best teacher," that "practice makes perfect" —a philosophy, by the way, which the young men entering our ministry have been altogether too prone to adopt. But there was some excuse for him: he had entered upon the duties of a teacher at a period of life when few of his more intimate acquaintances supposed he would succeed. Still, he was successful and very popular. And, as he reasoned with some good degree of plausibility, preaching is but a higher branch of public instruction,

"and why need I fail in that department any more than in the one I have successfully tried?" His success in teaching undoubtedly stimulated his vanity; and he was not long in concluding that he possessed one essential qualification of an evangelist — that he was "*apt to teach.*" He did not stop to think that the experience of Christ's servants has demonstrated the fact that though the minds of children may easily be influenced by great truths, *men are slow to learn.* They need line upon line and precept upon precept before they will accept a new idea in matters of religion, and long before they will reduce that idea, once accepted, to practice. Things new and old must be at the command of him who, in the name of Jesus, would successfully address himself to the work which He came to perform — the work of developing the spiritual element in man, and of establishing between him and his Creator a perpetual communion.

But I am disposed to excuse much of the false reasoning of my brother on this subject, from his earnest desire to be engaged in the work before him. He could not bear to be separated from it by long preliminaries. Was he at this age impressed with presentiments of an early doom? And did he feel called upon, in view of the shortness of the time allotted him for the performance of a great work, to engage in it at once, and trust in the promise to the true disciple that the Spirit of God should sustain and guide him, should in the hour of need give him what to say?

Some qualifications for the office to which he aspired with all the enthusiasm of his young heart, he certainly had. He had read his Bible — had searched it daily.

He was familiar with its themes of life and love. He had cultivated a habit of prayer; a habit which brings the soul into communion with God, subdues earthly passions, and sanctifies the great purposes of life. He had meditated upon the life of Jesus. He had caught a portion of his spirit, and his young heart burned within him as he pondered upon the truths he had revealed. And, in addition to all these essential qualifications, he was animated by an intense love for the Gospel as understood by Universalists, and a burning zeal for its diffusion in the earth.

Desirous of suggesting, in such a manner as not to discourage his high purposes, a more sober, and, as I thought, a more enlightened view of the responsibilities of the sacred office, I inquired of him if he thought his age or acquirements would justify his undertaking on the conditions he proposed to himself. "Age!" was the instant response; "did not Jesus dispute with the doctors in the temple when he was but twelve years of age? And as for acquirements — these are only made by practice." He did not suffer the opportunity to pass without reminding me of the fact that, within the circle of my acquaintance, were students of a theological seminary, who had spent years in acquiring a knowledge of the creed, but who were profoundly ignorant of the Bible. Thus we see in this, as in many other cases, that a bad cause is often sustained by most plausible arguments! But, to do him justice, my brother sincerely believed, and not without some just grounds for his opinions, that one instructed in the principles of the Gospel, and imbued with its spirit, would do more to win to God than he who,

deficient in these essential qualifications for the ministry, relies on his literary acquirements principally to give him rank in the kingdom of heaven. All these qualifications combined, however, are what he must seek who would "show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." To this view of the matter he ultimately came; and, while he regretted that he had neglected some of the essential conditions of a successful ministry, he resolved to atone for this neglect in his own case, and to make up for what the cause of Christ had suffered, by devoting the means which had been required for his own education, together with suitable additions thereto, to the thorough instruction of his sons; thereby qualifying them for the profession of his choice, and enabling him, though dead, yet to speak to the world through their instrumentality.

Discovering the condition of his mind, I invited my brother to accompany me on a tour through Western New York, proposing, as an inducement for him to go, to introduce him to some of the preachers of our order in that region. He very cheerfully accepted the invitation, and we set out about the middle of August, in an open carriage. We stopped a day or two in Wolcott, Wayne county, among the people of my charge. Here everything pleased him. From Wolcott we went to Rochester. We were in no particular hurry, and made it a point to call on such persons, residing along the road, as were known to be favorable to Universalism. We desired to make their acquaintance, to the end that we might ascertain the prospects of our cause in their respective neighborhoods, and, where we could, to engage them in a

more zealous defence and promulgation of its principles. Some of these interviews were fraught with the most amusing incidents, and were ever remembered by my brother as the most laughable that ever appealed to his keen sense of the ridiculous.

On arriving at Rochester I introduced him to several clergymen, and among others to the Rev. George Sanderson, at that time the editor and proprietor of a religious journal known as the Herald of Truth. The very cordial and frank manner of this brother made a favorable impression on the mind of James, and he was desirous of cultivating his acquaintance. He spoke of his kindness and hospitality often after we separated.

We tarried in Rochester, however, but a short time. Having an appointment to preach in Gaines on the following Sabbath, we set out with a view of reaching there the next day. Our course lay along the Ridge road, that great natural curiosity which passes through one of the most delightful, as well as the most productive, sections of the Empire State. Viewing the beauties of nature refreshed by a recent shower, and feeling his own spirits refreshed somewhat by his interview with the friends in Rochester, he seemed for the first time, for several months, to be in excellent spirits, and was very free to communicate the history, as well as the purposes, of his life. He gave me his experience in school teaching, and detailed the substance of many conversations he had with the patrons of his school on the subject of religion, and wound up by saying, "It is all a mistake that a man, if he is a Universalist, must be a hypocrite, in order to succeed and to be respected in any public capacity. I have never been

backward in the least," he continued, "in avowing and defending my sentiments on all proper occasions. And I think my frankness in this matter has not only been of advantage to me personally, but also of some service to our cause." Here is a suggestion not unworthy the attention of the young. Be true to conscience and to God, and all honest men will respect you. Sycophants are always despised, and despised most by those whose favor they seek.

I do not claim much credit for my brother on the score of his frankness in this matter. The truth is, it was not in his power to conceal his sentiments on the subject of religion. These sentiments were his life. They engaged his best thoughts and his deepest reverence. But had he possessed the power of concealment, and been able to play successfully the part of a religious hypocrite, I am satisfied that he never would have been guilty of an act so detestable in his sight. From my earliest recollections, he despised all cant, all formality, and all hypocrisy in matters of religion. Believing, as he had been taught, that every man should be true to his own convictions in matters involving the dearest interests of life, he had no patience with that easy virtue which barters fidelity to conscience, to truth, to Jesus and to the everlasting Father, for the smiles of the world — a cold and capricious world.

Having fulfilled my engagement in Gaines, we started on Monday morning for Perry, Genesee county, to attend the annual meeting of the Genesee Association of Universalists. We still persevered in our newly adopted custom of calling on those favorable to Universalism on

the road we travelled, and thus made several very interesting acquaintances.

At Perry, he seemed to enjoy the services of the occasion to excess. It was indeed a glorious meeting. He had an opportunity here of making many acquaintances, and of listening to several able discourses preached by clergymen whom he had never before seen — discourses breathing the spirit of the Gospel, with little of the bitterness of controversy, and with great unanimity appealing to Universalists to exhibit the practical influence of their faith in their lives. If to that large assembly, gathered from the east and from the west, from the north and the south, this meeting proved a source of spiritual rejoicing,— a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,— to him it was one of unspeakable joy.

On our return to Rochester, he concluded to remain with Mr. Sanderson, to enter his study, and to engage at once in the preparation for the ministry.

I have been thus particular in describing the incidents of this journey, because of the influence which it had upon his subsequent career. It opened to his mind some of the evils which must, at that time, necessarily be encountered by a young man who should enter our ministry. It revealed to his personal inspection some of the darker and more discouraging aspects of our denominational affairs. And, young as he was, they did not escape his notice. He saw from the answers which my inquiries elicited,— inquiries addressed to avowed Universalists scattered along a route of some two hundred miles, and representing almost every class of believers,— and also from the tone of preaching at the Association, that the time had

come, when the best interests of the denomination demanded a more thorough organization of its members, and a deeper toned spiritualism, than had hitherto been urged. The controversies waged with so much zeal, and sustained with so much ability, by the pioneers of our faith in that region, had had the effect to multiply believers in the great salvation, and these we found wherever we travelled. We also met with some, who, though seldom if ever blessed with the preaching of the word by an accredited apostle of Universalism, had, from the study of the Bible alone, or from meditations on the character of God, as revealed in nature and providence, or from the instructions of some book, or pamphlet, or religious journal, come to regard the central idea of Universalism with favor, and were ready to avow themselves Universalists. These boasted of occasional fits of zeal, of sacrifices they had once or twice in their lives made to hear a preacher of the new doctrine which they had learned. Some reported a journey of ten and even fifteen miles, performed under many discouragements, for the sake of listening to a single discourse, while others had gone from fifty to a hundred miles to attend the annual meeting of an association or a convention. Still, a few moments' conversation with them readily disclosed the melancholy fact that, with all their attainments, many of them had very vague and indefinite ideas of their duties as professing Christians — of that exalted devotion which Universalism, cherished in the heart, is calculated to inspire, or of the self-sacrifice which it demands on the part of its votaries, in order to insure its defence and promulgation in the earth.

The great idea, that divine grace will ultimately triumph over the sins of the world and deliver the whole creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, contrasting as it did with the dark and repulsive doctrines of the modern church, was gratefully accepted, and to many became the all in all of Christianity. Men, that from childhood had yielded to the force of tradition and early education, and bowed in deference to the popular interpretation of the Scriptures; that, in the light of this interpretation, had looked upon the divine character as destitute of every grace that is calculated to awaken love or to inspire devotion, passing from this realm of darkness — this region and shadow of death — into the glorious light and liberty of the truth, contented themselves, seemingly, with dwelling upon the glory of the change that had been wrought in their spiritual condition; and, amidst the splendors of the present, heightened by painful memories of the past, paused in their career, and sometimes neglected to ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have us *to do?*"

These believers, these scarcely more than nominal Universalists, were scattered somewhat profusely along our route, judging from the number we called upon, and from the greater number of whom we heard. I say nothing against them. Possibly they had *done what they could*, under the circumstances, to promote their personal growth "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." They had indeed accomplished much more than many others — they had bidden defiance to popular opinions, and "*sought the pearl of great price.*" But there was one melancholy

aspect of character which they generally exhibited. Many of them had been connected with churches, had submitted to their discipline (which when brought to bear upon heretics, so called, was often cruel and vindictive), and had some melancholy recollections of the treatment they received from their pastors when they announced to them that they had received new light, and that they were searching the Scriptures daily to see if God "will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." They remembered, with a degree of horror, the bitterness which this announcement engendered, both in the heart of the pastor and in the bosom of the church. They found, in some cases, a degree of sympathy in their views, but generally no compassion for their "*heresies*." They were not permitted to withdraw in silence from the communions they had respectively honored — they must be cast out — denounced heretics, children of the devil, and heirs of perdition, and, as such, formally excommunicated from the church — an example to the faithful, warning them against the damnable heresy of trusting in "the living God as the Saviour of all men."

This treatment, which so many of the converts to Universalism were called to endure, served to disgust them with the popular forms of church government, and to render them averse to all organization, except, indeed, such as was necessary to despoil the dominant sects of their supremacy, and to bring their more odious doctrines into disrepute with all reflecting minds. Our ministry, and our religious journals, at the time of which we speak, looked more earnestly to this result, than to any par-

ticular forms of organization. They were like workmen in the quarry, gathering the rude materials which were subsequently to be wrought into the great temple. And wherever we went, these unshapely materials of the denomination were to be found. They were *believers*, rather than *doers*. They were proud of their independence — happy to think that, having *escaped* the thraldom of the orthodox church, they could now look down upon the authority of all associations with an air of defiance and a feeling of contempt.

Such as had thus felt the yoke of bondage and escaped, found no want of sympathy in their horror of church government. Those who had stood aloof from all religious associations, through jealousy of their individual rights, were not displeased with this cry against the arrogance of priestcraft and the tyranny of the church. Though it was what *they* "had always known," they were glad to have their cherished opinions respecting these fearful powers endorsed by such as could plead their own experience in justification of what they affirmed. And thus sustained, while they congratulated themselves that they *had never* submitted to these powers, they vowed eternal hostility to all their pretensions. If any organization was necessary to carry forward "*liberal sentiments*" and to neutralize the force of existing organizations, so perfect among the bigoted and the intolerant, they would consent to enter into these, *provided*, however, that the new organizations were not "too much like the orthodox!" They would unite together and contribute their means, for the purpose of erecting meeting-houses and maintaining the preached

word. But the thought of religious culture by a stated and frequent observance of the beautiful ordinances of Christianity, being "altogether too much like the orthodox," was not always sufficiently considered in the formation of religious societies. Where believers were isolated, where they were called daily, as it were, to fight the battles of faith, to repel the charge of heresy and infidelity, and even to vindicate their personal character from the foulest aspersions, dictated by the most malignant superstitions, there seemed to be more excuse for their neglect; and they generally thought less of churches as means of grace. If they could silence a self-righteous opponent, either by retaliating his insults, or by letting off a whole broadside of unanswerable proof texts, as Universalists their work was done, their mission was accomplished.

And never did this aspect of our cause appear darker. to my own mind, than while on this western tour with my brother. We talked it over and deplored it. He seemed deeply impressed with it. He felt then that mighty efforts were demanded of the ministers of our faith in behalf of some systematic and efficient organization. His own insufficiency for this work became more and more apparent to his mind. "I *must* study," he exclaimed after a brief silence, in which his mind was apparently engrossed with meditations on this subject; "*but I must preach also. Experience is the best teacher.*"

It will be seen in the pages of this work which follow, that this resolution was carried out. He had scarcely commenced a regular course of study for the ministry,

when, receiving an invitation to visit a rural district in the vicinity of Rochester, he wrote a sermon and went forth to make a trial of his powers as a preacher of the everlasting Gospel.

It will also be seen, that, though he was what might properly be termed a doctrinal preacher,— never happier than when proclaiming the great central truth of the Gospel, as understood by Universalists, and marshalling his proof-texts for its defence, — he never rested till those who believed were ready to avow their faith before the world, and to take upon themselves all the obligations and responsibilities legitimately belonging to a profession of faith in Christ. He gathered churches wherever he preached and circumstances would permit, and sought to arouse a spirit of devotion, of deep and fervent piety, in the hearts of all his hearers.

And perhaps I may add here, that the influence of the journey alluded to, never fading from his mind, to a certain extent shaped his course for life. The impressions he then received and avowed respecting the wants of the denomination, were only deepened and rendered more effective in determining his action by a more familiar acquaintance with its condition. Till death he labored and prayed for a more thorough organization of its members, and for the diffusion of a more vital piety among them.

While at Perry, he was introduced to the Rev. N. Brown, who afterwards became a fellow-student with him at Mr. Sanderson's. Mr. Brown speaks of this interview with him thus : —

" I first became acquainted with Bro. Cook at Perry,

in the summer of 1837, at the annual session of the Genesee Association. We had an excellent meeting. Brother Cook was much animated, and expressed to me a fixed determination to devote himself to the ministry of Christ. 'Yes, Bro. Brown,' he exclaimed, while a heavenly smile seemed to play upon his countenance, and his voice trembled with emotion, 'if God spares my life, I will do something yet for the cause which is so dear to my heart. There are difficulties and embarrassments in the way, I am young and inexperienced, but, Bro. Brown, *it is in me!* I feel it is *in me*, and it will come out yet!' He was indeed quite young, scarce eighteen, I believe, and poor in this world's goods. Yet, young and inexperienced as he was, surrounded by embarrassments as he intimated to me, I was convinced, even from the short acquaintance I had with him at this time, that he would make good his determination, and at last fully succeed in the ministry of the great salvation."

CHAPTER IX.

STUDENT LIFE IN ROCHESTER.

It has already been stated that the subject of this memoir entered the study of the Rev. George Sanderson in August, 1837, with a view of devoting his time exclusively to a preparation for the ministry. Desirous of presenting to the reader a faithful picture of his student career, the writer addressed letters of inquiry to the above-named gentleman, and also to the Rev. Nelson Brown, soliciting information respecting his habits during this period of his life, and he is much pleased with the uniformity which characterizes their testimony on the several subjects of which they speak. Mr. Brown's reply is presented first, as being more full and satisfactory in its details than that of Mr. Sanderson; a fact which we account for, not on the ground of superior regard for my brother; but, *first*, because Mr. Brown, as fellow-student, was his confidential friend, was with him more, and was made acquainted with all the workings of his mind and the aspirations of his heart; and, *secondly*, because he had more time to arrange and systematize his sketch than had Mr. Sanderson, who, at the time he wrote, was laboriously engaged in the busi-

ness of the senate of Pennsylvania, as one of its leading and most influential members.

We should be happy to present the communication of Mr. Brown entire, but the following extracts must suffice.

"Bro. Cook: You have requested me to furnish you with some reminiscences of the early student and ministerial life of your departed brother, Rev. James M. Cook, to be embodied in a brief biography of that lamented servant of Christ, about to be published by yourself.

"I rejoice to learn that this humble tribute to departed worth is soon to be rendered. Such a work will be hailed with gratitude and joy by the numerous friends and admirers of this once zealous and eloquent advocate of the great salvation, this truly devoted minister of Christ. I think such a biography may be made deeply interesting to all who love the Gospel of a world's redemption. It may in a special sense be made profitable to the young disciples in our denomination, who, even amid the embarrassments of poverty, and persecutions, and perils, have thoughts of entering the Universalist ministry. Here they will behold an example of perseverance and self-sacrifice worthy of all imitation. They may thus take courage by this example, and be stimulated to the same perseverance and with the hope of a similar triumph, whatever their embarrassments may be. A copy of the contemplated work should be in the library of every student in the ministry of the great salvation.

"I have kept no written records or reminiscences of

Bro. Cook's early student career, nor of my own, save what may be gleaned from a few miscellaneous old letters, etc. But, as we were students together for several months, and entered the ministry about the same time, and as many of the incidents of our student career were somewhat identical and blended together, I may be able to call to mind, even at this late date, some events belonging to that period which are freshest in my mind, and which interested me most at that time.

* * * * * *

"Bro. Cook came to Rochester in the summer of 1837, and commenced his studies for the ministry under Rev. George Sanderson, then publisher of the Herald of Truth, and pastor of the Universalist society in that city. Bro. Cook and myself were room-mates together, in fact bed-mates beside, in the hospitable mansion of Bro. Sanderson. We devoted a share of our time to the duties of the printing-office, and the balance to study, to writing sermons, etc., in our mutual studio. We were very intimate, and were scarcely separated from each other a day for several months. Bro. Cook seemed to me like an own brother, and this feeling I doubt not was mutual. We had *high* times — in spirit — and we had *low* times together. We would mutually encourage each other and sympathize with each other, when the star of hope and final triumph seemed dim to our vision. We talked over our plans for the future together, assisted each other in our studies, and remained, from that time to the last, warm and mutual friends. Bro. Cook was sometimes afflicted, as well as myself, with 'low spirits,' which he facetiously denominated the 'blues.'

Yet he was far more fortunate than myself, in this respect. They were with him but transient; he had a faculty of exorcising them by a determined effort, without suffering by them any serious inconvenience. With me they were rather more stubborn and lasting. He would occasionally remark to me in his half serious, half bantering way, 'Bro. *Brown*, you look *blue!* Come, let us sing a good old-fashioned, rousing, spiritual song, and perhaps it will bring you to your natural color.' He would at such times strike up

'All hail the power of Jesus' name,'

'When I can read my title clear,'

or, with still more zest,

'Come Holy Spirit, heavenly dove,

— great favorites with him,— and we would mutually sing them through.

"Bro. Cook was by no means an adept in music, yet he was very fond of singing. He seemed to sing 'with the spirit and with the understanding.' His greatest favorites were tunes and hymns of a cheerful, animating character. He never could tolerate airs of a sad and mournful strain. Tunes of a *minor* key were with him disagreeable and annoying. He once remarked to me that he considered the true idea of music to be a beautiful and a harmonious expression of gratitude and joy.

"Notwithstanding Bro. Cook's usual cheerful and hopeful spirits, yet he had his dark hours of despondency, as well as myself. But he soon rallied with some such expressions as these,— 'Bro. Brown, I am bound to

go ahead! I have put my hand to the Gospel plough, and I shall neither go back nor look back.' At another time, he rallied from a desponding mood by exclaiming with much earnestness, while a gleam of enthusiasm lighted up his countenance, 'The spiritual harvest is great, and the laborers are few; and even a *poor* laborer, if his *heart* is in the work, is better than none. God will, however, do *his* part for me, if I am faithful to do *mine*.'

"I have said he was poor in this world's goods. He was also in debt. But he studied the most rigid economy, and was seemingly by instinct an excellent manager and financier. He was prudent and temperate in all things, and graduated his limited means to his actual necessities and wants with great judgment and tact. He spent no money for mere idle toys or needless luxuries. His great ambition was to obtain a good library of books, and to be able to master them, and to succeed at last as an efficient minister of the Gospel of Christ. His library at this time was small, yet consisted of a well chosen collection of books. Bro. Sanderson's library was at our service, but it was by no means extensive. We missed several important works which our limited means would not then allow us to procure.

"Bro. Cook was rather a close student, and possessed a remarkably retentive memory. When he undertook to master a subject he did it completely in all its bearings. He was a great *Bible* student. He loved the Book of books; it was his companion by day and night. Even at this stage of his student career, the Scriptures were seemingly as familiar to him, so far as the *letter* was con-

cerned, as the simplest books of rudimental knowledge. In fact, Bro. Cook was sometimes facetiously denominated, by his intimate friends, as the 'walking Bible and perpetual Concordance!' Whatever he considered worth reading at all, was thoroughly read, and as thoroughly digested. He grasped a subject with great tenacity and power, and transmuted it, if desirable, to his own peculiar cast of thought,—fixing it in his mind permanently and uneffaceably.

"Bro. Cook drew around him many warm and devoted friends while in Rochester. They loved him for his moral worth; they esteemed him as a Christian, and they admired his talents and devotedness. Possessing a cheerful temperament, a pleasing address, and excellent conversational powers, frank and cordial in his communications in the every-day relations of life, he was a great favorite in the social circle. But his leading and favorite theme at all times, and on all occasions, was the Gospel of the great salvation. He loved it, and he was anxious that the whole world should receive and love it, and practise its spirit. In his youthful enthusiasm, he verily thought that it needed but to be taught in its purity and power to be joyfully embraced by all. But he was often keenly disappointed in his ardent expectations. 'Alas!' he would say, at such times, 'they are joined to their idols; let them alone. The veil is over their hearts, as well as over their eyes.'

"Bro. Cook was an excellent controversialist. Perhaps he loved controversy a little too well, and sought it sometimes when it was not wholly judicious. Yet much is to be allowed for his ardent and youthful enthusiasm, and

his remarkable zeal for the truth. As he loved Universalism with his whole heart, he was equally as intense in his hatred of the doctrine of endless torments. He was jealous for the honor and reputation of the denomination to which he was attached. I think I may safely say, that I have scarcely known his superior as a debater, as exhibited in his casual friendly collisions with clergymen and laymen of the "contrary part" during his student career in the city of Rochester. He was quick of perception, possessing great shrewdness and tact in managing an argument. And yet he was always honorable and fair, taking no undue advantage of his opponent. He despised sophistry and stratagem, and rarely, unless justly merited, resorted to the keen-edged weapon of satire and ridicule. Yet no man could use this weapon with greater effect than himself if needful. He was generally cool, perfectly collected, and completely at home. He was ever ready with a suitable reply; the Bible seemed as familiar to him as his childhood books. I have heard him debate with clergymen and laymen on several marked occasions, and it is but simple justice to say that I have never, in a single instance, known him to get angry or to become really worsted in controversy. In one particular instance, his opponent — a clergyman of some note — was completely foiled, even in the estimation of his particular friends. He withdrew from the house very abruptly, exclaiming, in much seeming anger, 'I will have nothing more to do with you. You beat the devil himself in perverting Scripture!'

"In the fall of 1837, Elder Knapp, of revival notoriety, came to this city, and commenced his revival operations.

The excitement ran very high, and vast numbers flocked to hear; — some attracted by sincere motives of good, but by far the greater portion by mere excitement or curiosity. Bro. Cook and myself would occasionally attend in the evening. We were mutually disgusted and indignant. Universalism was Elder Knapp's favorite hobby. He seemed to owe the doctrine an especial spite. It troubled him more than all other heresies put together, — more so than *sin* itself, as Bro. Cook once remarked. We sometimes took notes of the elder's sermons when present. This disturbed the equanimity of the jealous elder, and, on one particular occasion, he so far forgot his calling and the decencies of speech, that he exclaimed with much apparent wrath, pointing to Bro. Cook and myself, 'There sit two young spawns of Satan with pencil and paper, trying to turn into ridicule the solemn realities of eternity! They are preachers of the devil's lies, and I don't want any of this congregation to have anything to do with them. To-morrow night I am going to shame the devil by breaking the back-bone of Universalism, and I want you all to come and see how easy 't is for me to do it. I don't need but five minutes to do it!' After the close of the meeting, Bro. Cook sought an interview with the reverend calumniator. He felt it his duty, as he then said, to call him to account for some of his hard sayings. Elder Knapp evidently felt uneasy. The interview did not seem welcome to him. Bro. Cook introduced himself by saying, 'Well, Bro. Knapp, I have been called rather hard names to-night, but never mind, you meant no harm, probably; a mere pleasantry, of course. But there is one point I

wish you to explain. You have accused me of preaching the devil's doctrine. Now you know very well, sir, that when Universalist ministers preach, they preach the destruction of the devil and all his works. But, according to your doctrine, I would like to ask you, Bro. Knapp, who preached the truth in the garden of Eden, the Almighty or the devil?' 'The devil was a liar from the beginning,' replied the excited elder, 'and ye are of your father, the devil.' 'But look here, elder,' continued Bro. Cook, 'you have said in the hearing of this congregation that eternal death is the penalty of transgression; this penalty you have said was denounced upon Adam. Well, the devil told Adam that God's word was not to be depended upon — that it was a very easy matter to escape; all Adam had got to do was to be a little sorry for his sins, and he would go scot free, and thus leave the Almighty in the lie! Now, don't you preach a *rather* similar doctrine, elder?' 'I will have nothing to do with the devil nor any of his imps,' exclaimed the elder in great rage; and he mingled with the excited crowd, and was soon lost to our view. 'Come back, Bro. Knapp,' says Bro. Cook, 'come back and break the back-bone of Universalism before you go! It will only take you five minutes, you know.' But the elder was gone, and from that hour he studiously avoided coming into contact with the valorous student of the 'more excellent ministry.'"

To this statement of Mr. Brown, we add the testimony of Mr. Sanderson, with the simple remark that there seems to be a wonderful coincidence in the traits of character which they respectively describe. These men have

been separated from each other for about fifteen years, and during his life had little or no personal intercourse with Mr. Cook after his settlement as a minister; yet their memory fixes on the same features in the character of his student life, — a conclusive evidence that these features were marked and distinct, — and they present them with a uniformity of statement that would suggest the idea of their having been written in that "mutual studio," of which one of them so often speaks. But no; he left his mark upon their minds, which fleeting years have not effaced.

Mr. Sanderson writes:

"I regret that my memory furnishes only scanty materials as a tribute to one so justly deserving a green spot in the wide and desolate waste which the ravages of time have made, and are making, in this otherwise beautiful world. My acquaintance with James M. Cook commenced with his becoming a student to me, and a member of my family, in August, 1837. He was quite young, but his enthusiastic admiration of the illimitable salvation of the gospel interested me greatly in his behalf, and induced me to facilitate his advancement to the ministry by all the means that my humble circumstances would admit.

"He manifested from the beginning great impatience to commence the work of the ministry, confident that, as he was armed with the truth, he could vindicate it; that it was so plain, that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein; then 'why,' he would ask, 'might he not go and preach the glad tidings of the gospel of Christ?'

"Subsequent study, reflection and experience satisfied him how inadequate had been his means to the wants of a ministry, that had already suffered too much by the incautious haste with which many were precipitated into it. I have not the data at hand by which to state how long it was that young Cook was occupied in his course of preparation. Confident that he was *competent to commence* the great work he had so ardently espoused, and that he had a just sense of its responsibility, I encouraged his making occasional appointments in adjoining towns. I was the more ready to do this, because I observed that he felt, in the overwhelming and overshadowing force of the truth illuminating his mind, the way illuminated to the heart of others; and to this conviction, combined with an excessively ardent temperament, and impassioned disposition, was he indebted for the signal success of his first efforts."

Mr. Sanderson next refers to his effort at the time he lost his manuscript, to be hereafter considered, and adds:

"This successful effort, under circumstances of such great disadvantage, determined his future course, and from this period he improved every opportunity to make appointments to preach on the Sabbath, seldom relying upon manuscript sermons. The assurance that he had received, that he was to succeed as an extempore speaker, seemed by no means to release him from a thirst for scriptural knowledge, most readily acquired by manuscript exercises. He continued an assiduous student, chiefly of the Bible; analytical examination of it was his almost constant employment; he rapidly became familiar with it,— with all its intricacies in all its ramifications.

"The facility and clearness with which he remembered the subjects he had investigated, and the strength of his confidence in the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation, inclined him to seek opportunities, either public or private, to discuss doctrinal questions with clergymen of an opposite faith. As a controversialist, he was eminently adapted and successful. It was difficult, at the time Mr. Cook commenced his ministry, to resist the temptation to grapple with the doctors of theology. Their systems were being worn out; one strong-hold in the citadel of orthodoxy, after another, was giving way; its defenders were becoming desperate, and firmly resisted innovation; the spirit of inquiry, so terrible to their false systems, was abroad, and moving the mighty deeps of the human soul, and there seemed again to break through the chaos of the past a voice, saying, 'Let there be light!' At such a period, so auspicious, it is not surprising that young Cook, with his ardent and somewhat impetuous disposition, should have been impatient to 'pull down' a *Babel* that so long confused and confounded the world.

"Upon the very threshold of his ministry, and I think before he received a letter of fellowship, circumstances personal to myself alone required that I should leave the field he had just entered. But I felt confident that he would be an able and efficient minister of the Gospel, if his life and health were spared. Separated remotely from him, constantly occupied in another profession, I seldom heard directly from him after leaving Rochester, and know nothing of his experience from that time. It is evident, however, that he carried, to the close of his

5263131

life, that deep sincerity of heart, and enthusiastic admiration of the Gospel and its revelations of God as the Father and Saviour of all men, which first prompted him to become a laborer in his Master's vineyard."

It is needless for me to add to these testimonies. They clearly reveal the spirit in which he pursued his studies, and the confidence which he at that time reposed in the word of God as all-sufficient for him who would do the work of an evangelist.

CHAPTER X.

COMMENCES PREACHING.

The spell was upon him, and Mr. Cook could no longer brook delay. Fully bent on his purpose, so often expressed, to commence his ministerial career, not by study alone, but by preaching, by actual service, he had scarcely time to decide upon any systematic course for the future, ere, yielding to the impulses of a misguided zeal (not allayed, but rather encouraged, by the consenting manner of Mr. Sanderson), he, with his fellow-student, went forth to test his powers for the work before him. Seemingly hurried on by some uncontrollable influence, with characteristic rashness he sought and found an appointment in the town of Gates, some four miles from the city of Rochester. The day was fixed about the first of October, 1837. The meeting was to be held in the district school-house, and one of the students of the city pastor was to make his maiden effort on the interesting occasion. Drawn together by various motives, — some by a desire to hear the word as expounded by Universalists, some by a very natural curiosity to witness the first effort of the young preacher, whoever he might be, and some perhaps to witness and glory in his

failure, thus glorifying the God of *their* creeds,— drawn together by various motives, quite a large audience assembled.

Mr. Brown, in the following graphic terms, describes this day's experience, its rewards and its results, so far as himself and his companion were concerned. "On the morning of the designated day we started on our pedestrian journey, with trembling hearts and with some little forebodings as to the success of our hazardous mission. In due time we arrived at the scene of our labors for the day. We found the house already crowded with apparently anxious listeners. The 'strange doctrine' was almost wholly unknown in that neighborhood. Curiosity, if no higher motives, had called out a large audience for once at least. We took our seats,— and now the question was to be decided who should preach, Bro. Cook or myself. It is already decided, whispers my companion. You preach to-day (there was to be but one discourse), and I will preach next time. I saw that Bro. C. was not to be moved from his determination, and we proceeded with the services. Bro. C. led in prayer. It was very appropriate and affecting. It seemed to inspire me with confidence and hope. My maiden sermon was finally preached; with how much success becomes me not to say. Suffice me to add, that we both received a cordial invitation to come again as soon as possible, and perhaps something might be done, etc. We put up for the night with a Bro. G., where we were hospitably entertained, and the next morning he kindly brought us to the city in his carriage. On parting with us, he put into our hands three 'shin-plasters' on the Rochester Corporation, amount-

ing, all told, to the encouraging sum of seventy-five cents! He left us with a cordial shake of the hand, and with a word of cheer, which, as near as I can remember, was, 'The laborer is worthy of his hire.' There was something about this shin-plaster pay, in connection with the words of our friend, 'the laborer is worthy of his hire,' that struck Bro. Cook and myself as so extremely ludicrous, that, on arriving home, we enjoyed a hearty laugh over it. 'Well, Bro. Brown,' says Bro. C., 'your sermon has won you seventy-five cents, and it only cost you a week's labor to write it! But never mind; better luck next time. Wait until it is *my* turn to preach, and then see if I don't get a whole medicine-chest full of plasters.' We mutually divided what Bro. Cook denominated the *spoils*, and stuck them up in a conspicuous place in our sanctum, where we could see them easily, and thus be reminded of the pecuniary encouragement attending our first and mutual ministerial efforts."

At the solicitation of friends present at this meeting, Mr. Cook left an appointment for the same place, and when (about two weeks after) the day arrived, he was there, armed with a written discourse founded upon the words of the apostle, "For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for a necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." This text had often been repeated by him; it expressed the deepest sentiment of his heart — a sentiment which he had cherished for months, perhaps years, before — a sentiment which ever after was uppermost in his soul. The sermon was prepared with much care — had cost him many anxious days and some sleepless nights. When it

was completed, he submitted it to his fellow-student, desirous of obtaining an expression of his opinion upon its merits, before giving it to a motley multitude of curious hearers.

"It was a discourse," says Rev. Mr. Brown, "of no ordinary ability, systematical, and abounding in beautiful passages. I did not hear him preach it, but he read it to me in our mutual studio. 'Do you *really* think it will do, Bro. Brown?' was his somewhat anxious inquiry.

"'Certainly, without flattery, I do. The only fear is that your hearers may think it too large a sermon for so small a man.'

"I said this, not to flatter, but to encourage him. He was in no danger of being injured by a few such words of cheer from a confidential friend. He smiled and replied, 'You very well know that it is all Cook! Cook! from beginning to end,— not a word stolen,— only what I have stolen from the Bible!'"

The congregation on this occasion was not large, but it contained some of the most devoted friends of our cause in that region. They were men of strong minds and generous hearts. They were hungering for the bread of life. They had looked forward for many weary years to the period when they should have an altar of their own and a ministry commissioned to teach the great salvation. They had come to regard that day as near at hand, when they invited this young student to make his first attempt among them. And hence he was not the only one that felt a deep concern for the favorable result of that day's labor. His solicitude was shared by many

hearts — hearts that responded to his prayers for the blessing of God to crown his trial effort.

On the principle of judging a tree by its fruit, we must pronounce this first attempt at preaching one of decided merit. The friends of the cause he advocated were more than pleased, they were delighted. The indifferent were startled by the earnestness of his zeal, while some "who went to scoff" retired "to pray."

Among the friends who, on this occasion, were much interested in the services, was Robert Wooden, who resided in Chili, about two miles from the school-house in which this meeting was held. This gentleman was well instructed in the principles of the Gospel,— has since commenced preaching,— and judging the young man by what his eyes had seen and his ears heard, he felt that, if they could procure his services, a society could be organized in his neighborhood, and a stated ministration of the word supported. He was familiar with the hold which Universalism had upon the hearts of his neighbors; and judging from the interest he felt in the labors of this youthful herald of the cross, he was ready to decide that God had sent him in the right time to meet their wants, — to go in and out before them, and break unto them the bread of everlasting life. He, therefore, at the conclusion of the service, waited upon him, with the request that he would leave an appointment, and come and preach in the "Brick School-house" (as it was familiarly termed), in the vicinity of his residence. He acceded to the proposal, which, under the circumstances, was very gratifying to his feelings. He named the text he would

then consider,— one of the strongholds of orthodoxy,— and gave a general invitation to the people to be present.

In this proposal to seize at first upon one of the old fortresses of the church, one of the strongest pillars of a venerated creed, there was very little to denote *originality* of purpose. Few men have ever entered our ministry that did not feel perfectly competent to exhibit the glaring inconsistencies which the popular interpretation of such parables as the Wheat and Tares, the Sheep and Goats, the Rich Man and Lazarus, involves. And, as a general rule, it requires less study and preparation to point out the errors of our neighbors, than to develop the true philosophy of righteousness, and successfully urge its claims. And when we consider the disadvantages under which many of our preachers have entered upon the duties of the sacred office, we shall cease to wonder that their first efforts have usually been devoted to controversy about creeds, rather than to those sublime principles of our faith, which, when understood, lead to the higher virtues of the divine life.

During the interval which elapsed between the appointment and its fulfilment,— about three weeks,— he employed a portion of his time in preparing the discourse which he had promised, while Mr. Wooden was equally diligent in notifying the people, in the region round about of the contemplated meeting, and in encouraging those of "a contrary part" to attend. Every honorable expedient was resorted to by this zealous brother to insure a large meeting. To some he proposed the extreme youth of the preacher as a curiosity; to others the novelty of the subject, and the difficulty he would find in explaining it;

while to those who claimed to be Universalists he appealed, urging them to be on hand and to decide whether the time and the man had both arrived for the establishment of a stated ministry. His efforts were not in vain. At the hour of the appointment a large concourse of people had assembled. Carriages of every style, in great profusion, were to be seen around that humble schoolhouse. And men, failing to secure a comfortable seat within the house, stood about the doors, "watching for the sign of his coming." None were more anxious than Mr. Wooden. The responsibility of inviting the young man, and also of inviting the audience, rested upon him. He wandered from the house to the street and from the street to the house, as if bearing some mysterious despatches which he was not permitted to utter, from the expected to the expectant, and from the expectant to the expected. The time was at hand, and yet no minister. "Was he sick? or had he announced too great a subject, in the height of his zeal, and with commendable prudence resolved to save himself from the reproach of a public failure, by absenting himself from the meeting?" The moments hung heavily upon this brother, as these inquiries successively flitted through his mind. He began to reproach himself with no small share of hasty action, as his heart throbbed with mingled emotions of hope and fear.

We have said that James devoted considerable time to the preparation of his discourse for this occasion. He was aware that by it he was to be judged, and he had reason to expect that if it was favorably received, he would be invited to take up his residence in Chili. This

prospect fired him with ambition. But if he failed! There was in this thought an element of despair. The night previous had worn heavily away, he had slept but little, had counted the strokes of the clock nearly every hour, had hailed the morning with joy and yet with dread; to quiet his apprehensions he had sung, and sometimes laughed, without knowing why, and when he felt his heart sinking within him, a silent prayer was breathed to God for a renewal of his strength. The morning never seemed so long. But at length the hour for starting to fulfil the long-talked-of appointment arrived. A friend had kindly offered him the use of a horse, and he set out on horseback. He was very careful to put his manuscript in his pocket, and then, to be sure that it was there, he took it out, looked at the text, turned its leaves and replaced it some half-dozen times in succession before starting. Thus assured that he had the identical manuscript,— the one prepared expressly for that day and that occasion,— he mounted his horse and rode off. Meditating upon the work before him, his countenance now illumined with hope and anon shaded with fear, he proceeded on his way, occupying himself now with repeating some passage of his sermon, now a text of Scripture, and now a prayer for the guidance of the divine Spirit, till he arrived within sight of the appointed place. Mr. Wooden hailed his arrival with inexpressible delight. As he alighted from his horse, Mr. Wooden extended to him his hand; but while in the act of reciprocating this courtesy, the thought of his manuscript induced him involuntarily to withdraw his hand and place it upon his pocket, when, lo! the manuscript

was gone! It had worked out of his pocket, and was probably miles distant, besmeared with mud. No sooner had he touched his pocket than its fate was determined in his mind, and simultaneous with the conviction that it was lost, he bounded some two feet from the ground, and as he came down he stood silent for a few moments, his countenance revealing to Mr. Wooden all manner of horrible emotions, from disgust with himself to despair. "It 's gone, sure," at length he quietly remarked, and the expression of his features at the time made a powerful appeal to the sympathies of his friend. "I felt very much excited at the time," says Mr. Wooden in a letter to the writer, "for I had invited him to preach to us, and had invited the congregation to attend. As soon as I could command my feelings, I asked him what was to be done. He replied, after a moment's pause, 'You must sing, and we will have a meeting.' You may judge my feelings at this critical moment. O my God, help the youthful servant of the Master, was my prayer." And help him he did, as the sequel will show.

The Rev. Mr. Brown writes me as follows: — "He took his seat and began to prepare for the service. His manuscript sermon, which had cost him more than a week of incessant labor, was gone beyond all hope of recovery. What was to be done? There was a large and anxious audience before him, and their expectations were evidently great. Many of them had come from a distance to hear the new preacher,— the wonderful boy-preacher, as he was called. Some of them had listened to him a few Sabbaths before with great interest and delight. And then, again, the lost sermon was a labored

production upon a certain controverted text, which had previously been announced, and how could he expect to do it the least degree of justice by an extemporaneous effort! He sat for a while utterly bewildered. At first, he thought of no other alternative but to frankly state his misfortune to the congregation and to dismiss the meeting. Then his pride began to come to his relief a little, and he finally concluded that a desperate man, even amid a desperate state of circumstances, might by a desperate effort accomplish as great a feat as to preach a passable sermon without notes. He would try. He could but break down at the worst, and it would not quite kill him in the estimation of himself or his friends. He therefore nerved himself for the task, though his voice faltered and his knees, to use his own expression afterwards, smote together like Belshazzar's of old. As he progressed, however, his confidence increased, his tongue was loosed, his thoughts became collected, his command of language was complete. The whole subject opened before him, words came to his tongue faster than he could utter them — indeed, he seemed like an apostle inspired by the spirit of God. In the concluding portion of his discourse, his eloquence was masterly and overwhelming. He expatiated upon the riches of God's grace and love, and contrasted, in a startling manner, the doctrine of a limited faith and the sublime theory of a world's salvation. The whole audience were electrified, and tears gushed from many an eye. It seemed as though they had been waiting upon the ministrations of an apostle of primitive times. He closed his discourse and sat down, with devout gratitude to the Most High for the freedom

with which he had been blest. At the close of the services, many strangers came to him, and took him by the hand, wishing him Godspeed. He was invited to come again. A subscription paper was put in circulation, and soon he was permanently engaged to preach with the people in this portion of the Lord's vineyard for one year. His time was finally divided equally with the friends in Chili and Churchville. Societies were organized, and there was a constant increase of interest and zeal."

CHAPTER XI.

PUBLIC SENTIMENT IN WESTERN NEW YORK.

Mr. Cook had not attained to nineteen years of age when he received an invitation to settle, for a few months at least, in Chili. This fact, while it speaks well for his first public efforts, indicates the readiness with which the advocates of the great salvation were at that time received in western New York, and leads us naturally to inquire into some of the causes which more immediately contributed to this state of *public sentiment.*

The truth is, this was about the period when the greatest and worst efforts, which have disgraced the church during the present century, were put forth to create religious excitements, — to "get up revivals" in the various churches throughout the country. History has already stamped the character of these excitements, and we shall not, therefore, be deemed wanting in charity, if we say that it is with the greatest difficulty that we are now enabled to credit the testimony of our own recollections respecting the scenes enacted in them. We can scarcely believe that men and women, professing to be followers of Jesus Christ; to be living examples of the influence of his religion of love; to be, in short, "the very elect of God," could so far disregard their most

obvious duties, and so far disown their allegiance to the Prince of peace, as to band themselves together by solemn covenants and pledge themselves to the support of such men as at that day were called revivalists. "We wot it was through ignorance" they did it; for these men, notwithstanding their high-toned professions of godliness, were, most of them, utterly reckless of all the rules of common courtesy, strangers to Christian charity, and given to the use of the lowest, most vulgar and disgusting expressions that ever disgraced the American pulpit. Their representations of the divine character were such as to rob blasphemy of its criminal aspects, and to give it the charm of a common duty. Several of them were convicted of the most revolting licentiousness, committed while carrying forward "the work of the Lord," to which, according to their pretensions, they were specially called; a work in which, it was often proclaimed, "the Lord was signally rebuking infidelity, astonishing the votaries of Universalism, and converting sinners with such rapidity as to make the devil himself tremble for the fate of his kingdom." Congregations, wanting confidence in their integrity and their virtue, still paid them for going into their sanctuary and there indulging in low blackguardism which would disgrace a common bar-room; for drawing pictures of the Almighty which would put to the blush Milton's most fearful conceptions of the devil, and for caricaturing and misrepresenting the honest convictions of their neighbors. Judging from the course they almost invariably pursued, one would be led to infer that it was always stipulated by the church or society employing them, that they should direct about one half of their

efforts against Universalists and Universalism. And they were seldom complained of for any neglect of this part of the contract.

We will add, that with the most indubitable evidence of their unworthiness for the sacred office,— evidence stamped upon the public mind,— several of these men were sought after by the churches, were paid large sums of money to go from place to place to repeat over their vile slang, and their blasphemous representations of the divine character, because, forsooth, these extraordinary performances in the pulpit, in communities not *blest* with the more dignified and respectable amusements of the theatre, were calculated to attract crowds of the idle and the dissolute to the house of God, and because from these a few could usually be gathered in to swell the numbers of a languishing church.

Alas! how many a conscientious soul, disgusted with such outrages upon the order of society committed in the name of religion, forsook the temples of the living God, and sought refuge in the cold and cheerless retreats of infidelity.

Very probable, there never was a time more favorable for *such* revival operations in western New York than when Mr. Cook commenced his labors in Chili. For several years previous the spirit of *speculation*, as a desolating scourge, had swept over that garden of God. Quiet and sober citizens there were, who for years had struggled hard to fell the forest and to prepare the soil for cultivation, that it might yield to themselves and their families in return a comfortable subsistence. And these had just begun to congratulate themselves that

they were at length relieved from apprehensions of want, and that "lean, lank poverty" was no longer permitted to look in at their doors. But unfortunately, dreaming or awake, they heard the clamor about the glories of speculation, about the rise in the price of farms soon to be divided into "*city lots*," or to be rendered still more valuable than city lots by the cultivation of the morus multicaulis,— cultivation which would enable every child of the husbandman, so long doomed to wear the coarser fabrics of wool and flax, to sport the gayest silks, and "lay the flattering unction to their souls" that in their attire they were among the most economical of all the daughters of the land. They listened, and up started from the misty future visions of wealth and glory brighter far than any that eastern fancy had ever painted, and thousands hastened to write themselves down as the sons of Midas, more successful than their father in the art of making gold, or — fools!

It was during this extraordinary excitement that "cities at the West" sprung up with such astonishing rapidity; cities whose localities could no more be determined by their founders, than the precise spot where the garden of Eden was located can be determined by geographers at the present day. This, however, was of little consequence. If destitute of a "local habitation," they had "a name." Plats of them were devised by cunning workmen, the press stamped them by thousands, and they were spread broadcast through the land. Gazing upon these plats, like the man who knew there was a devil because, forsooth, he had seen a picture of his satanic majesty, multitudes knew there must be such cities as the *pictures*

before them represented. The vision of faith was clear, and they saw, as represented, forests and prairie lands in the back ground, and rivers rolling their peaceful waves beneath the banks *that were to be* adorned with massive structures for the accommodation of trade ; with school-houses, those nurseries of thought, for the children of the first settlers and the native born, and with churches for the devout; where, having made a fortune by the purchase of a square, each "*pioneer*" could rest from his labors, and spend his remaining years in the worship of — not mammon — but God ! The artist seldom forgot the value of embellishments. Parks and broad streets were bountifully provided for on the map, and the particular localities where aristocracy, with its elegant mansions, was sure to find a home, were with great condescension indicated, so that those having money to invest could make a wise selection. "Fogyism" departed from its ancient abodes among the farmers and small villagers of that day, and that particular region; and many who, as a religious duty, had hugged it as the only hope of life, now abandoned it as unsuited to "the spirit of the age," denounced it as the ally of labor and toil, as the barrier to ease and opulence, and made haste to grasp the glittering prize — *an undisputed title to a lot in a western city !*

About these "fancy stocks" intense excitement prevailed, among a class whose habits, one would suppose, had proved a sufficient security against any ordinary mania for speculation. Some, however, sacrificed a competency,— the result of years of toil,— in the hope of

becoming suddenly rich, and many more were only saved from ruin by their poverty and want of credit.

This was not all. The political excitement which usually characterizes the year of a presidential election, raged with extraordinary violence in 1836; a fact which is of itself sufficient to suggest that the minds of men, at the period of which we write, had been much engrossed in other matters than those pertaining to their spiritual interests.

But now the spirit of speculation had begun to subside. Men that had lived so fast in the future, in dreams never to be realized, were suddenly restored to the present, and to their "right minds." They reflected upon the past, and the ghosts of their follies haunted them. They saw how little they had really gained by suffering their fancies to work out their fortunes, to transfigure them into nabobs, and wisely congratulated themselves on their discretion if the visions and hallucinations of the past had not betrayed them into a sacrifice of the fruits of industry,—all they really possessed. They began to realize how unsatisfactory are most of the efforts to become rich without obedience to the established laws of business, to the requirements of industry and economy. Consequently, the worship of mammon for a period lost its charm, and appeared least attractive as seen through the shadows of that recklessness which it had induced. Those who had bowed in deepest devotion before this altar, now longed for a respite from a service which, instead of affording any joy, had brought only darkness, misery, and remorse to their souls.

Besides, the political campaign was over, and a calm

in that department of human interest was gradually settling down upon the activities which this campaign had excited. There was, indeed, a cloud over the land, and the inhabitants thereof were casting about to see what it portended.

Just at this juncture, so auspicious for such purposes, aspiring men, claiming to be the servants of Jesus Christ, resolved to take advantage of the times, and kindle an excitement (which unfortunately served only to cap a climax of evils), by an appeal to the religious hopes and fears of those who had already, in a measure, become disgusted with the pursuits of the world. And they were successful. By changing the current of thought, and thus arousing to action a class of faculties which, during the reign of speculation and political excitement, had been outraged by utter neglect — faculties which had lain dormant and inactive, they insured a measure of success to their proselyting schemes. In fields that had been most neglectful of religious interests, most blighted by the scourge of "campaigns" and *speculation*, they found their richest harvests.

In such neighborhoods, those who had been taught in childhood the dogmas of the popular creed, and who had never deemed it expedient to question the truth of these dogmas in maturer years, who assented to them as men passively assent to other and less pernicious superstitions, signs, etc., were almost sure to be numbered among the first victims to these revival operations. Their fears were easily excited by an appeal to their first religious impressions; under these fears they saw themselves the children of wrath, exposed to the divine vengeance and

hastening to perdition, and what less could they do than cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" And now the skill of the revivalists was taxed to soothe these agitated hearts, to inspire them with hopes of a blissful immortality, and to give them rest in the assurance that they were accepted, owned, and adopted of the Father. And now, having passed these opposite experiences, they are pronounced hopefully converted, and, without any farther test of their fitness for the kingdom of heaven, are flattered to perseverance with the ill-deserved titles "*saints*" and "*children of God.*"

But all are not so easily soothed; the fear of hell, sometimes awakened by these revival movements, refuses to yield to promises of glory, and hastens its unhappy victim on to despair. Many of the most conscientious, listening to what they erroneously supposed to be the Gospel of Christ, have looked upon their past lives as a hopeless forfeiture of the divine favor, and rushed from despair to suicide.

But there was a large class, in almost every neighborhood visited by these excitements, that readily discerned the sordid motives of the revivalists, their scheming for the spoils, and their hollow-heartedness, and these either avowed their open and determined hostility to everything bearing the name of Christianity, or (more wisely) sought a more rational interpretation of its principles and aims than was furnished in the popular creed, or in these fanatical movements of its accredited advocates. Few are capable of surrendering their confidence in Jesus, and of endorsing the suggestions of infidelity, and hence the greater portion of those who had become disgusted

with every form of modern orthodoxy turned to Universalism, in the hope of finding a higher and a better form of Christian faith. And consequently, when one of the advocates of this doctrine made an appointment to preach in a neighborhood where a protracted meeting was in progress, or had been held, he was sure to find a willing ear on the part of the people, and almost as certain to find a church with its pastor to denounce his sentiments and to vilify his character.

CHAPER XII.

HIS RECEPTION IN CHILI.

No sooner had Mr. Cook commenced his labors in Chili, than he was called to encounter a most desperate assault made upon his sentiments by a Rev. Mr. Smith, pastor of the Presbyterian church in that town. At an evening meeting held in a school-house near the residence of Mr. Wooden, with great severity of manner he accused the young man of teaching the most obvious absurdities; saying that he told his hearers that "though they sowed *chess*, they would be sure to reap *wheat;* though they planted thistles, they would harvest figs; and though they sowed to the flesh, they would of the flesh reap life everlasting. Robert Wooden being present when these statements were made, with much apparent sincerity desired Mr. Smith, at the close of his service, to inform the audience present where he obtained his information. But this seemed to be no part of his duty, and turning upon Mr. Wooden, assured him that he should continue his efforts against "this damnable heresy" the next Friday evening, and for several consecutive weeks. Mr. Wooden expressed his satisfaction with this announcement, and hoped the subject would be thoroughly investigated, and the meeting dispersed. The next Sab-

bath, this redoubtable champion of modern Calvinism, waxing valiant, gave notice of his subject for Friday evening, and added, "Mr. Wooden may come, and bring all his ministers with him."

Thus exhibiting his valor in the absence of any enemy, he excited the admiration of his people, and they went forth to invite their neighbors to come and see what hope remained for Universalism in Chili.

Mr. Wooden went to Rochester on Friday, informed Mr. Cook what had taken place, and invited him to be present at the appointed meeting. This invitation Mr. Cook very promptly accepted, and in the evening, in company with Mr. Wooden, went to the place of meeting. On arriving, considerably past the hour, they found the service had been delayed to await their coming. "The moment we entered," says Mr. Wooden, "a movement in the entire audience was observable, and we heard distinctly, in whispers often repeated, '*There he* comes, with his minister.'"

Mr. Smith's attack upon Universalism was characteristic of the times; remarkable only for the ignorance of the doctrine which he displayed, and the bitterness of spirit which he breathed in every sentence. When he got through, Mr. Cook arose and respectfully requested the privilege of making a few remarks. He was answered, "I give no privilege for remarks in my meeting."

"I will not detain you nor the audience more than five minutes," said Mr. Cook, whose earnest manner now gave to his words all the significance of a challenge to his assailant to discuss the questions at issue between them on the spot.

"I perceive the man is a minister?" Mr. Smith said, inquiringly.

"I freely confess that it is the great purpose of my life to preach that Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation," was the reply.

"Then my meeting is dismissed."

Taking advantage of the moment, Mr. Cook gave notice that he would reply to the discourse to which the audience had just listened, the next Sabbath evening. Mr. Wooden followed up this notice by a public request for the use of the school-house in which they were assembled, that those who had been affected by the poison might share the benefits of the antidote. Objections, however, were made to this by Mr. Smith and his particular friends, and for a season the attempt to secure the house seemed likely to fail. But fortunately, a man of more liberal sentiments than Mr. Smith and his followers, who, by virtue of his office as a trustee, or by virtue of a large investment in the house, came forward and claimed the right to decide the question whether or not the house should be opened for a vindication of the doctrine which had that evening been assaulted by Mr. Smith; and then intimated to the reverend gentleman and his friends, that their quiet acquiescence in such an act of justice and courtesy would go far to save them the necessity of finding another place of worship for their future accommodation.

This unexpected turn of affairs, accomplished by the agency of one of Mr. Smith's hearers, opened a bright prospect to the young herald of truth, and not without a due share of gratitude to God and exultation of spirit

did he announce his appointment for the second time; and, to the chagrin of Mr. Smith and those who but now were glorying in his abusive efforts, he was very particular to say, "*The meeting will be held in this house.*"

The next day the excitement in the neighborhood was very great, and continued to increase until the time appointed for the review of Mr. Smith arrived.

A very large congregation it was forseen would assemble, many of them for the first time to hear a Universalist, and it therefore behoved the youthful preacher to make all possible preparation for the occasion. He felt that strangers to "the new doctrine" whereof he was to speak, which had been so violently denounced by Mr. Smith, would, in case he failed to vindicate it, ratify his judgment, and hold the man in contempt, as a corrupter of morals and an enemy of religion, who should attempt to proclaim it in their midst. If, on the other hand, he succeeded in repelling the charges brought against it, and in convicting its assailant of ignorance or wilful misrepresentation; if he indicated the rule by which the Scriptures could be interpreted in perfect harmony with all its essential principles, and showed that it furnished the highest incentives to holiness and a divine life, he should at once establish his claims to the confidence of its friends, and to the respect of those who had prejudged his creed a heresy. He therefore had the most urgent reasons for going into the desk duly prepared for the work before him.

It is safe to conclude that he did not disregard the demands which necessity laid upon him.

When he arrived at the school-house, it was crowded

in every part. Rev. Mr. Ford, the Baptist clergyman of Chili, was present, and, with a courtesy in marked contrast with that of Mr. Smith, he readily consented to offer the introductory prayer; and in a fervent supplication to the throne of grace he prayed that the young man, to whom so many were soon to listen, might in all his communications be guided by the spirit of truth.

It is sometimes said, in criticising a sermon, that "its *text* was excellent." Certainly on this occasion, if the sermon bore any resemblance to the text, it must have been permeated with a spirit of reproof and admonition which those of the contrary part would not be likely soon to forget. It was selected from Eccl. 10: 13, and reads as follows:

"*The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is mischievous madness.*"

Mr. Wooden remarks of this discourse, — "Mr. Cook went on and examined the objections to Universalism which Mr. Smith had repeated, *thoroughly* and *candidly*. He left no false position untouched, none unrefuted. And his triumph was not only complete, but was evident to every one present not utterly blinded by prejudice. The known youth of the speaker added greatly to the glory of his success. His eloquence enforced by Scripture testimony, together with the confidence which he evinced in every position he assumed, combined to render the occasion one of intense interest to the friends of Universalism, to soften and subdue in some cases the more violent prejudices of its opposers, and to prepare the way for its successful promulgation in that vicinity."

The next Wednesday evening the same school-room was the scene of another encounter. Mr. Smith had informed Mr. Wooden of his intention on that evening to follow up his discourse, which had been reviewed, with another on the subject of Universalism; but, on arriving at the house and finding it unusually crowded, his courage seemed to fail him, and he commenced his service by denying that he had "promised to discuss the merits of Universalism that evening, he had only intimated to an individual that he might *possibly* make it the topic of his discourse."

Mr. Wooden immediately arose and said,

"I suppose myself the individual referred to by Mr. Smith, and I here affirm that he did promise to preach on Universalism to-night."

The assertion, though creating quite a visible sensation among the audience, was very prudently suffered to pass by Mr. Smith without a denial. He proceeded with his discourse, which consisted of a mere tirade of abuse, directed against Universalism and its votaries.

When he had concluded, the Rev. George Sanderson, who, with the Rev. R. Tomlinson, was present by invitation of Mr. Cook, arose and began to point out the error into which, as he charitably believed, his brother *through ignorance* had fallen. But he was not permitted to proceed. Mr. Smith interrupted him, and immediately dismissed his meeting, with an air of concern which appealed strongly to the sympathies of his friends, and silently urged them to leave the house. Acting on the impulse thus awakened, they rushed for the door in such confusion that Mr. Sanderson was

obliged to give way. At this instant Mr. Cook, mounting a seat, gave notice to the departing flock of Mr. Smith, in tones which their confusion could not drown, of his intention to reply to their pastor the next Sabbath evening. He fulfilled this engagement before a large audience, in an able and instructive discourse.

Thus did he introduce himself to the people, to friends and foes of his religion; to a people with whom he spent the first four years of his brief but eventful ministry. Such was his first reception in Chili.

It is sufficient to add, that, after the scene described above, Mr. Smith announced no more discourses on Universalism. He, however, attempted to prevent the spread of the doctrine, by an unmanly opposition carried on in private circles, by low appeals to ignorant prejudices, and by insinuations reflecting upon the character of its advocates and votaries. This, together with occasional allusions to it in the pulpit, was the sum of his opposition known to Mr. Cook during his residence in Chili.

As a sample of his public attacks, the following incident may be given. A few months after Mr. Cook removed to Chili, his friends engaged and fitted up a small chapel, nearly opposite to Mr. Smith's meeting-house. A member of Mr. Smith's church was employed to do the painting, and he was requested to place over the entrance to the chapel, in appropriate letters, the words of the apostle, "*God is love.*" In painting the *s* he unfortunately curved it the wrong way.

An opportunity was thus furnished (by one of his own intelligent flock) to ridicule the attainments of his

neighbors. So, having made great exertions and *protracted efforts*, he had succeeded in getting up a little religious excitement among his people, which he humbly ascribed to the operations of the Holy Spirit, when Mr. Cook ventured in one evening, to hear the preaching and see how matters were progressing. Mr. Smith, observing him in the audience, resolved to mortify him by denouncing the whole denomination as illiterate in the extreme. To justify these denunciations, he proposed to cite facts. He commenced in the following dignified strain: —

"You will see around the country, stuck up over the doors of their meeting-houses, '*God is love.*' And here is an instance opposite — their learning symbolized in the letter *s* turned the other side to!"

"Yes, and done by a Presbyterian, too!" were the words of Mr. Cook, which followed the sentence, without the slightest regard to the *pause* indicated by the "exclamation point;" and they certainly destroyed the entire effect of the graceful gesture which the speaker was attempting, in imitation of the objectionable form of the letter, at that moment.

CHAPTER XIII.

LABORS IN CHILI.

THE wrath of man is sometimes made to praise the Lord. And it would seem that such was the ruling of Providence in the case of Mr. Smith. His attempt to exclude Universalism from the town of Chili, by means which we have sufficiently indicated, resulted in its more immediate introduction, and its permanent support there. By his ill-advised opposition to the doctrine, the attention of his own friends and supporters was called to it, and they were thereby led to see the groundlessness of their former prejudices against it.

And then events connected with this controversy were suggestive. Mr. Cook was young — very young. Had he failed to defend his faith against this boasting theological student, *few* would have thought less than formerly of its claims. But in the ease with which he vindicated its great principles, *many* discerned its beautiful harmony with the intuitions of the soul, with the suggestions of nature, and with the teachings of the divine word. Truth arms its votaries with power for its successful defence. But the falterings of an advocate sometimes betray the weakness of his cause; and in the manner of returning from a contest, provoked by his own boasting, the devotee of a creed acknowledges and pro-

claims the difficulty of its defence. In Mr. Smith's withdrawing from this controversy as he did, after two very unsatisfactory efforts to invalidate the testimony alleged in support of Universalism, and to prove it a heresy of the most fatal tendencies, those most interested detected a practical confession of conscious weakness, and felt a growing desire to investigate the doctrine which he had so signally failed to disprove. Add to this the fact that in this controversy Mr. Cook had established his claims to the confidence of his friends, who before, judging him by his years, had felt some apprehensions for the result of their efforts to establish and maintain a Universalist society under his ministry, and had consequently only settled him "on trial" *for three months, or longer, as the parties after his settlement might agree*, and it will appear quite obvious to all, that, though the effort to exclude Universalism from the town of Chili was designed only to do evil to the cause, "God meant it unto good." And in good it resulted to him. All doubt of his capacity to fill the office to which their partiality had already called him, was now removed. The day of "trial" was passed, and the season of distrust was at an end. With those, also, who had no respect for his theological opinions, he acquired an influence favorable to his future prosperity. He inspired them with a respect for his talents, and with admiration for his zeal and for his devotion to the cause to which he had thus early consecrated his life. Ay, more. By his success he had raised himself above that reproach which bigotry, confirmed by age, is wont to pour on the inexperience of youth, and at the same time had won

the respect of those nearer his own age, the respect due to the *ministry*,— always more grateful to the servant of Christ than friendship and affection accorded to *self*.

A direction was thus given to public sentiment in the town, which resulted in his more permanent settlement with the society. The temporary engagement which endowed him with a pastorship for the *whole term of three months* was immediately superseded by a formal engagement for a year; and from that time forward, until the day of his death, the responsibilities of the pastoral relation rested upon him.

This taking a minister *on trial* may be a very prudent measure for societies, especially when negotiating with a young man whose powers have never been tested, and whose future usefulness is consequently "the substance of things hoped for" by his friends. But as it always implies some distrust of requisite qualifications, the young man, who consents to a proposition for a temporary settlement, is perpetually harassed with the recollection that he may be but a brief sojourner, the victim of a strange caprice, to be judged from efforts made under the most embarrassing circumstances, and sent forth to his fate bearing the marks of this judgment, and thereby arousing the suspicions of those who had otherwise received and treated him with deserved favor. He consequently (unless largely endowed with self-respect) feels his embarrassment, exhibits his powers to disadvantage, preaches, not as the servant of Christ, but as the servant of his employers; not as one having authority, but as one seeking an opportunity to acquire it. He never feels himself clothed with the dignity of the office

which he is struggling to fill; and sometimes he fails and becomes discouraged, when a generous expression of confidence on the part of those to whom he *begins* to minister — *an invitation to settle as pastor* — would have the effect to inspire him with that confidence in himself which, at that particular moment, of all others, he needs, and which would ultimately make him "approved unto God, a workman needing not to be ashamed."

It is acknowledged that there are persons who might be inflated with vanity by such early expressions of confidence; some, aspiring to the sacred office, who never needed assurance from others that they were only a "little lower than the angels." Well for these if kept "on trial" while they live. But we speak for those whose modesty commends them to confidence, and whose diffidence but too effectually clouds their intrinsic virtues. Let such be encouraged, lest the church and the world be robbed of their services; lest their light, so much needed in this world of darkness and error, be forever hid beneath a bushel.

Having received this invitation to settle with the friends in Chili, Mr. Cook left the study of Mr. Sanderson, and in January, 1838, removed to the scene of his labors. He found that his efforts had already kindled no small amount of zeal in behalf of Universalism; had engaged neighbors in the discussion of its merits; had filled its friends with hope, and its adversaries with a determination to arrest its further progress; but as yet there was no organization. The elements of society were there, waiting for some hand to mould them into form.

To accomplish this result, therefore, became with him a desideratum of the first importance. He applied himself to the work with great energy, and very soon had the satisfaction of seeing a goodly number of men and women, of great moral worth and social influence, enrolling their names as the founders of a new society, having for its object a wider diffusion of the principles of the Gospel, as understood by the order of Christians to which he belonged.

About the same time, measures were adopted to procure a place more convenient than a district school-house in which to worship. A small chapel, built by the Presbyterians, and standing nearly opposite (as we have already intimated) the Presbyterian meeting-house then occupied by the charge of Mr. Smith, was fixed upon as most desirable. Fortunately this chapel, at the time, was in the hands of a gentleman who became one of the main supporters of Mr. Cook. He very generously opened it for the benefit of the new society, and bade them welcome to its use. Not satisfied with this expression in behalf of the movement, he added a liberal contribution for the support of the pastor, which was renewed from year to year, until Mr. Cook removed to another field of labor. This gentleman's name was Benjamin Sheldon; and I record it here as a mark of respect for his example. "Though dead he yet speaketh" to those who have been, by a beneficent Providence, entrusted with a competency of this world's goods, and bids them "go and do likewise."

Mr. Sheldon's house became the home of Mr. Cook, very soon after he removed to Chili. Happy the young

man, and especially the young minister, that is blest with such a home! He very soon became a favorite with the family, and particularly so with Mr. Sheldon and his wife. This venerable couple had lived to see their own children grow up around them and to rejoice in their grandchildren, who often came to cheer them with the presence of youth and bless them with the exhibitions of their filial piety. They knew no difference between these and the youthful stranger that had sought and found a home beneath their roof. Indeed, there seemed to be in their feeling for my brother a religious element, added to the strength and tenderness of parental affection, which made him a special object of their regard. Blessed with such friends, with such a parental guardianship, he was contented, grateful and happy. The names of these friends were cherished till the day of his death among the holiest memories of his early ministry. Together now they mingle their voices before the throne.

Having thus readily obtained a place of worship sufficiently commodious to accommodate the infant society, comfort and good taste alike demanded that it should be improved in appearance, and the young pastor was called to take the lead in raising the means to accomplish the desired change. With the assistance of one or two friends, he obtained a subscription to meet the expense, and the work was speedily done.

Nothing could be more grateful to the feelings of most ministers, than to pursue their high calling free from all concern about the financial affairs of their charge. They have enough to engage their attention pertaining exclusively to their vocation, duties enough to occupy their

whole time, and generally concern enough about their own temporal affairs, to excuse them from any prominent part in the management of the temporalities of the society. And it may be added, furthermore, that societies would find it greatly to their advantage to relieve their pastors of all obligations of this character, by attending to their interests taemselves, in a prompt and efficient manner. The tithing system of past ages, and the extortions to which it has tempted a pampered ministry, have tainted the whole clerical profession with the reproach of preaching for money. And the more thoughtless (I will not say, the meanest and most avaricious), in communities generally, are the most ready to justify this reproach, whenever called upon by a minister for a contribution to aid the society. They see, in every appeal of this kind, the sordid avarice of the minister, and are ever ready to justify their own penuriousness and consequent neglect of society, by reiterating their complaints against a "hireling priesthood." Or if, in our denomination, they have too much self-respect to repeat this unmeaning phrase, as applicable to its ministers, they see, in every effort put forth by the pastor to improve the temporal condition of a society, some significant approach to the system of tithes; some unpardonable selfishness; in every dollar contributed, a contribution to the personal emoluments of him who is instructed to denounce "the love of money as the root of all evil." It is therefore the duty of societies, as far as possible, to save their pastors from direct contact with such prejudices — save them the necessity of appealing to the *generosity* of such men for pecuniary aid.

But, as too many of our societies are constituted and conducted, some knowledge of financial matters, on the part of those who minister to them, is absolutely essential to permanent success. And to this knowledge, coupled with an indomitable energy of purpose, must be ascribed much of the influence which Mr. Cook exerted for the advancement of our cause in the several fields of labor to which he was called. This will appear obvious as we proceed.

His first attempt of this character, as we have already hinted, was cordially responded to, by the friends of the society. The chapel was painted on the outside, giving it a very neat and tidy appearance. The wood-work inside was also painted; the walls were hung with a delicate-looking paper, and the whole aspect of the place was most essentially changed. It was inviting to the stranger, and grateful to the devotions of the habitual worshipper.

This house would seat about one hundred and twenty-five persons, comfortably; but it was often crowded by an audience numbering from one hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty. His first efforts in Chili had given him the reputation of an able doctrinal preacher. He was, therefore, often requested to preach from texts supposed to teach the doctrine of endless misery; requested to do so by persons believing this doctrine. He seldom refused to comply with these requests, and only insisted upon one condition, viz., that those who sent in a text should be present to hear its explanation. And usually, when such texts had been announced, the house was crowded to its utmost capacity, many persons travelling from five to fifteen miles to hear. In this way, and

by these means, the seeds of truth were widely scattered. In due season they germinated, and are now even yielding a glorious harvest. Many who rejoice in the glorious hope of a world's salvation ascribe their conversion, under God, to these early efforts of the lamented servant of Jesus Christ. "We heard him," they say, "when he stood forth for the vindication of his sentiments, and were most forcibly struck with the earnestness of his manner — with that entire and all-absorbing confidence in the doctrine which he preached, the ease with which he defended it, and the facility with which he disposed of all objections urged against it by the votaries of another Gospel. We were by observing these things led to investigate its claims, and now, thank God, through his instrumentality, we have been turned from darkness to light." Such is the cheerful testimony of many hearts, found throughout the region of his early ministry, and now rejoicing in the hope of universal redemption.

Nor was this the only method which he employed to instruct inquirers in the great truths which he taught. He encouraged them to come to his study, to make known to him the nature and extent of their doubts and difficulties in the way of faith, and in return he addressed himself to the work of answering the prayer of their hearts.

"What in us is dark, illume."

In these exercises, he was not only an *instructer*, but a *learner*. He detected in the various inquiries addressed to him by those who were struggling with the power of tradition and of false education, — inquiries addressed to him in that unreserved confidence which

his manner was eminently calculated to inspire, — the secret workings of superstition, the longings of a soul subject to its thraldom, and the precise character of those communications which best answer its demands, and serve to deliver it from its bondage into the glorious liberty of the truth. And, hence, from the lessons derived from these interviews, he was better prepared for the duties of the pulpit, and to adapt his communications to the real wants of his hearers. And by this means he became not only a profitable, but also a popular preacher. Having made himself familiar with the religious wants of popular assemblies, he addressed himself to these wants. Often did his hearers confess, that in his discourses he gave a better delineation of their own feelings and aspirations than they could have furnished to him. He described their fears and their hopes, their doubts and their faith, in such a truthful manner, that each felt a personal interest in his discourse, and appropriated its instructions with the same readiness that the patient accepts a remedy at the hands of his physician, who has fully described to him the commencement and progress of his disease, together with all the symptoms attending its various stages of development, while that patient has remained silent and only submitted himself to the inspection of his medical adviser.

And here, let me add, is the secret of popularity in the pulpit. It is the selection of subjects in which the masses feel a personal interest, and the power of adapting the discussion of these subjects to the capacities of those addressed. Mr. Cook was always famous for this; and hence his example suggests to the young men in

our ministry the following lesson: — "Repeat to a hearer some of the meditations which have engaged his own mind, give form and consistency to these meditations, and thus conduct them to some favorable practical results, and you do more, far more for the spiritual improvement of that hearer, than you can possibly accomplish by announcing to him some startling proposition, or some new and unheard-of theory, however ably you may discuss the latter, or however triumphantly defend the former. In the former case, you touch a chord of sympathy, which will vibrate to all the utterances of your own soul, and thereby compel a grateful acknowledgment of your superior qualifications for the sacred office; while in the latter, if you succeed in exciting wonder, you are liable with this sentiment to awaken a suspicion of your aim, and to provoke a charge of unpardonable vanity, of a disposition to display your own genius in a self-glorifying contrast with the stupidity of your hearers. And men are seldom pleased to offer such a forced and humiliating tribute to talent. They do it with reluctance, if at all. Under a certain degree of pressure, they may acknowledge the possession of learning on your part, of genius and of eloquence; but fortunate for your reputation if they do not discover in the whole performance the absence of that essential virtue, that highest recommendation, that unction which reaches the heart and kindles approval, that peculiar charm, without which all other virtues are vain — I mean "common sense!" In other words, they will feel a painful want of sympathy between your habits of thought and their own; and, instead of sacrificing themselves, all they are

intellectually, on the altar of your genius, as a tribute to your infinite superiority, they will seek to vindicate their claim to an honorable position as thinkers, by repudiating yours to unapproachable greatness; and will either smile contempt upon the lofty flights of your eloquence, or *snore* beneath the ponderous weight of your syllogisms. Hence it is that popular assemblies admire and praise "simplicity" in the manner of him who ministers at the altar. Hence it is that they accept, with inexpressible satisfaction, the *delineations of character*, for these delineations remind them of what *they* have seen. And hence, too, the joy awakened by an apt quotation from the words of Jesus, words ever addressed to "what is in man." The heart kindles and burns beneath these words, because they minister to the wants of the soul, and because they are adapted to the highest as well as the lowest order of intellect.

The words of the apostle are to my purpose, and I quote them as confirming the suggestions of his example: "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and *he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.* Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, *seek that ye may excel to the* EDIFYING *of the church.* Wherefore let him that speaketh *in* AN UNKNOWN TONGUE, pray that he may interpret. Else, when thou shalt bless with the spirit,

how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? *For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.* I thank my God I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might *teach others* also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." 1 Cor. 14.

Very little attention, at this time, had been given to the organization of Sabbath-schools, in western New York, among Universalists. Several of the larger societies had taken measures to secure the benefits of such schools, and had been blessed in their deeds. But few situated in the country, and composed of members scattered over a large extent of territory, had deemed it practicable to establish and sustain these nurseries of religious thought and pious sentiment, and consequently such societies were, for the most part, employing other and less efficient agencies, to the neglect of this, to carry forward the truth, and to secure its triumphs in the public mind. Mr. Cook was no servile imitator of established customs in the denomination. If convinced that reform was needed, he did not shrink from innovation. He believed that his facilities for promoting a knowledge of the Gospel would be greatly increased by the establishment of a Sabbath-school in his societies in Chili and Churchville; and, therefore, proposed the measure to his friends, with that earnestness and ability which readily secured their coöperation; and thus another instrumen-

tality was brought to bear upon the great purposes of his life.

In the organization of the society in Chili, he proposed, as essential conditions of membership, faith in Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, and a moral and religious character worthy of such a faith,—proposed conditions of membership similar to those usually specified in the constitution of our New England churches. He had seen societies formed on a very different basis. Men associating themselves together for the support of religious worship, and contributing of their means to this end, were recognized by the statutes of the state and by the customs of the denomination as a Universalist society. The cause of truth sometimes suffered reproach and scandal from the utter indifference to disciplinary measures which these organizations so significantly represented. He early evinced an interest in a different state of things. He was anxious to see all our societies organized on the basis of *character*, as well as of creed. Nor did he rest content with this achievement. At an early stage of his ministry he introduced the subject of a church organization, and urged it upon the attention of his hearers at various times with much ability. But many of his people had for years counted themselves Universalists; had stood aloof from all such organizations, and could not bear to see the denomination aiming at the subversion of the independence of its members by such an unwarrantable "aping of the customs of the orthodox." This dread of subserviency to customs claiming the sanction of the apostles, and clearly indicated in the teachings of the Master,—this jealousy of individual rights, which

sets at defiance the most efficient means of grace ordained by infinite wisdom, — this madness of radicalism which, stopping not at the repudiation of the errors of modern orthodoxy, glories in a spirit of unrelenting hostility to all its pretensions and appliances, was never chargeable to Mr. Cook. He felt that, with their errors of opinion, the dominant sects had many and fundamental truths; and that, in many things, the means which they employ for the development of their religious sentiments, and for the propagation of their doctrines, might not only safely, but with great advantage, be adopted by our own denomination. "Because the *orthodox* believe in the existence of a God, shall Universalists deny it? Because they accept the Scriptures as of divine authority, as the only standard of appeal in all matters of religious controversy, shall we regard them as less than divine? Shall we dispense with religious observances on the Sabbath, because they have regarded the Sabbath with superstitious awe? And shall we neglect the organization of churches, and the observance of those divinely appointed ordinances which the Gospel recognizes as aids to devotion, as helps to the divine life, and then attempt to justify this neglect by saying that such organization and such observance are too much like the orthodox?"

Thus he reasoned, and by reasoning thus he justly condemned the habit which had obtained among Universalists at that time — the habit of standing aloof from the essential conditions of spiritual progress.

And this evil has not yet been entirely eradicated from our ranks. We are too much inclined to denounce all forms as the outward expressions of superstition. In con-

descension to human weaknesses, and especially to those weaknesses engendered by the appliances of *orthodoxy*, we are willing to tolerate some *forms* in our devotions. We are willing, for the sake of common custom, to have the holy supper observed. It can do no hurt, and may do some good. It may, at least, answer the demands of a conscience educated under the influence of a *false* system of faith, and may gratify some *minds*, simple though they are, minds that have unfortunately fallen into the common *error*, which represents Christ as having spoken to the world, when he said, "This do in remembrance of me." And, for the sake of this little good, we may innocently indulge ourselves and our weaker associates in this harmless observance.

This may not be the sentiment of any considerable portion of liberal Christians of the present day, but it is a sentiment which they should more earnestly repudiate, and more explicitly condemn in their conduct, than they have done in times past. If church organization, after an experience of nearly two thousand years, has been found to be the best means of bringing hearts worshipping at the same altar into a close and holy communion with each other,—if obedience to the divine command, *This do in remembrance of me*, has been found to quicken devotion, and, by recalling the past, to kindle the most glorious hopes of the future,—why hesitate to avail ourselves of both, and to acknowledge that they come down to us with all the sanctions of a divine appointment? In this light we must regard them, if we would reap the advantages which they were designed to afford the soul struggling for higher attainments,—for a more

constant communion with God. We must no longer talk about tolerating them as a burden which superstition has made sacred and tradition has entailed upon us. We must accept them as means of grace, and appropriate them to our own hearts. So the subject of these pages looked upon them, and with untiring zeal he labored to commend them to the favor and religious regard of his hearers, during the time he was engaged in prosecuting HIS LABORS IN CHILI.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHURCHVILLE MINISTRY.

It has already been stated, that, soon after Mr. Cook commenced his labors in Chili, at the solicitation of friends residing there he visited Churchville, for the purpose of seeing what could be done in behalf of Universalism in that town. He found there the remnant of a society organized in 1813; a society which had enjoyed the labors of Rev. Messrs. Adams, Knapp, Sampson, and some others, but which, if it still had a name to live, was really so destitute of vitality that it claimed no regard from its members, and exerted no influence on the public mind. It always requires an extra share of fortitude, and a corresponding amount of hope, to enter such a field. It is a most difficult matter, and usually as thankless as difficult, to erect a new edifice from the ruins of one dilapidated and wasted, especially if the second edition is to be an improvement on the first. And the experience of most ministers will justify me in saying, that it is much easier to gather the materials for a modern society, where no effort has been made at organization, than from the *fragments* of a society that has for years been wasting away slowly, as if by a lingering consumption.

Yet, as unpromising as was this field, he entered it full of hope, and the result shows that he cultivated it with that degree of success which causes the wilderness to rejoice, the waste places to be glad, and the desert to blossom as the rose.

Having preached here one or two Sabbaths, the friends of the cause rallied, and with great unanimity came forward and gave him an invitation to preach with them every alternate Sabbath for the year ensuing. This was in March, 1838. He accepted this invitation, and thus divided his labors between Chili and Churchville.

A friend in Churchville describes his first efforts in Chili, in terms of the highest admiration, and suggests that this opened the way for his call to the former place. She says: —"A notice having been sent to Churchville that a young man had made an appointment to preach in Chili, I availed myself of an opportunity to hear him. We had no preaching in Churchville, and many of our people, whose curiosity had been aroused by the announcement of his extreme youth, were also attracted to his meeting. When we gazed upon his delicate form and youthful features, we wondered that he should attempt to preach. The significant inquiry, What can *he* say? passed in anxious whispers from lip to lip. At length he arose to introduce the services; there was a dignified gravity in his manner, there was a thrilling charm in his voice, and a freshness and vigor of thought in his utterance, that invited attention, and relieved many of his hearers almost instantly of an oppressive solicitude for the success of his effort. Still, through the whole discourse, there were not a few hearts beating with intense

anxiety, lest some fault of memory, some mistake of utterance, some error of judgment, or some oversight in doctrine, should mar the excellency of his discourse, mortify himself, and disappoint his friends. But nothing of the kind occurred. As he advanced from one division of his discourse to another, a fervent, a heavenly zeal lighted up his countenance; his whole appearance was changed; the mount of transfiguration came to my thoughts, with all its radiant glories, and, with Peter, in the depths of my heart I exclaimed, 'It is good for us to be here.' Every heart was quickened to a generous sympathy in his aspirations for the guidance of the wisdom from above. The fervency of his eloquence, coming with the unction of his youth, and urged with frequent quotations from the sacred writings, moved the religious sentiments of his hearers to unwonted activity. He spake as one having authority, and tears of wonder, and gratitude, and devotion, mingled to suffuse many a cheek.

"After the benediction was pronounced, the aged came up, and the youth kept not back, to give him the hand of fellowship, and to bid him godspeed in his great undertaking."

The friends from Churchville on this occasion were delighted, and urged him most earnestly to come over and help them the first leisure Sabbath which he could command. He responded to this request in the course of a few weeks, and the writer quoted above, an elderly lady, describes his first effort in this town as resembling in its character and effects the one to which she listened in Chili. She says: "He had preached but

one discourse in Churchville, when our people solicited him to preach one half the time with them." This expression of confidence was duly appreciated, and, as soon as he had fulfilled engagements already made, he took upon himself the responsibilities of this additional charge.

It is a remark of an eloquent writer, that "There is a charm in sympathy which gives efficacy to exhortation; there is a degree of influence which those who participate naturally in our feelings may exert, that others, who cannot in all respects place themselves in a like condition, will fail to obtain. Thus an appeal from the young to the young will find a place in the heart, which the same words coming from mature lips, although seasoned with a maturer wisdom, and strengthened by experience, cannot secure. A spirit throbbing with the joys, and hopes, and fears peculiar to opening manhood may utter sentiments which will strike a chord in kindred spirits, that would not vibrate to the sober philosophy of a more advanced age, or even to the precepts of threescore years and ten."

The sentiment of this extract from the "Duties of Young Men," by Rev. E. H. Chapin, finds a beautiful illustration in the labors of Mr. Cook in western New York, and, indeed, in all the labors of his life. When in Churchville, his influence with the young was a marked feature in his ministry, which excited at once the bitterest envy of his bigoted neighbors, and the profoundest admiration of his own charge.

His open, frank, and generous manner, together with the zest which he evinced on entering into the innocent joys and social delights of the young, encouraged a degree of familiarity, which, had it not been managed

with commendable discretion, and sanctified by a love of purity on his part, must have proved disastrous to his influence as a pastor. But he was saved from evil himself, and by his influence he inspired his associates with that reverence for the ministry, which made his private and public instructions both grateful and salutary to their hearts. "Still," says a friend, "there were some who, emboldened by his affable manners and affectionate disposition, were disposed to test his regard for ministerial proprieties. These, approaching him with a familiar air, would take him by the hand, and urge him to join in their gay sports. He always had a ready answer to such solicitations,—an answer which rebuked without offending, and which appealed to the heart for a better appreciation of the motives which governed his intercourse with the young. Some young man whom he had thus touched he would take by the arm, would engage him in conversation, and then walk with him to some field or grove, where he could dwell upon the beauties of nature. Here he would select some shrub, or plant, or flower, expatiate upon its structure, qualities and uses, and conclude with some beautiful suggestions respecting the wisdom and the goodness of the Creator, which its organism and design displayed."

The favor of the young, which Mr. Cook enjoyed in those days, was improved by him for the advancement of the cause of truth. In the deeper depths of the human soul there is that which instinctively responds to the appeals of the Gospel as presented by Universalists. It requires a long course of training, a systematic process of desolation, which either perverts or destroys the

instincts of humanity, to prepare the heart to acquiesce in the suggestions of modern orthodoxy. And unless this work of desolation is commenced very early, the sympathies of youth can rarely be enlisted in behalf of this form of Christianity, and they are either led to a rejection of all systems of faith bearing the name of Christ, or else to the adoption of that which recognizes in God a Father and in Jesus a Saviour. Few persons were more thoroughly impressed with a conviction of this truth than was Mr. Cook, and few have ever profited more by it. He took special pains to cultivate the acquaintance and gain the confidence of the young who waited upon his ministry; and, if the associations of their childhood had been such as to predispose their minds to look with favor on the popular theology of the day, he spared no efforts to teach them the simple but sublime principles of a more excellent faith. And through these he often reached the parents, engaged them in the study of the better covenant, and finally had the satisfaction of numbering them among the most devoted friends of the cause he advocated.

Another result of his sympathy with the young, and their respect for him, was seen in the number of marriages which he solemnized. A little incident will show the efforts which were occasionally made, at the earnest solicitation of the parties, to secure his attendance at weddings. In March, 1842, he went to Alexander, to attend a conference of the Niagara Association. "A young man of his acquaintance, on the day of his marriage, did not shrink from a journey of some eighty miles, and travelled the whole distance in a sleigh, to secure his services in the evening. On the same day, a Mr. Fellows,

of Chili, travelled nearly the same distance, and by the same conveyance, to engage him to attend the wedding of his daughter, she resolutely declaring that she would defer the marriage in the event he could not be present at the appointed time. So much," adds Dr. Gage, "were the young people attached to him, that, when necessary, extra pains were always taken to procure his services on such occasions."

Nor was it on these festive occasions alone that the preference of youth called for his services. Often, when languishing upon the bed of sickness, and hopes of recovery had fled, the young, who had waited upon his ministry in health, turned to him with the greatest confidence for sympathy, and for the word of life needed to sustain them as they walked through the valley and the shadow of death. And none of these failed to realize their desire. His prayers at the bed-side of the sick and the dying breathed such perfect sympathy in their aspirations, and were uttered with such an unction of the spirit, that many who listened to them were happily delivered from the fear of death, and, under their influence, rejoiced in the hope of immortality. Those who had been instructed by his ministry, and who had felt the charm of his society, as the energies of life waned, and death approached, often requested him to be present at their funerals, and to speak to their surviving friends the consolations of the Gospel he preached. Few men, similarly situated, were ever more severely taxed by such demands for service than was he. His widow states that while he resided in Churchville he was frequently called to travel from twenty to thirty miles, always by

private conveyance, to visit the sick and to attend funerals. She gives one instance, which may be recorded for the suggestion it contains,—a suggestion to those who think a minister can subsist on faith, or the "east wind."

"In the vicinity of Le Roy, a gentleman was seized with consumption, and after a few months abandoned all hope of recovery. He had heard Mr. Cook preach, and was very anxious to see him,—to converse with him. Apprised of the desire of the sick man, he immediately set out to visit him. On arriving, he found that the man was gradually declining, that he was much depressed in spirits, dreading death. And he had much, in addition to the instincts of humanity, to attach him to life. He had an abundance of this world's goods, a most interesting family of children, and a large circle of friends that esteemed him. But now he had come to feel that all these ties must be severed, and that he must very soon lie down in death.

"James conversed with him freely on the subject of death, declaring it to be an ordinance of God, the common lot of all that live, which must be experienced, ere the soul can ascend to its inheritance at the right hand of God. He dwelt upon this inheritance, inspiring hope by his own confidence, and, when he observed that the sick man was gathering strength from the themes he had introduced, and the heart was moved with aspirations for a closer communion with scenes of immortal blessedness, he proposed to unite with him in prayer. On closing this service, he received the cordial thanks of his grateful friend, who, with tears in his eyes, devoutly thanked

God for the interview. Continuing longer than he anticipated at that time, he earnestly desired another interview. Accordingly James visited him again; sung, conversed, and prayed with him, much, as before, to the satisfaction of the dying. On returning home, he said he was amply rewarded for his labor by the interview,—by knowing that it had smoothed the pillow of death.

"At this time, he assured James that his kindness should not be forgotten; that when he died, by his directions he would be called upon to attend his funeral, and he sincerely hoped he would not disappoint the family; and *then* some compensation for his time, trouble, and travelling expenses would be given to him. He died, and, according to his request, James performed his third journey, in order to attend the funeral; making in all *six days labor*, and not less than *one hundred and eighty miles travel* by private conveyance! And yet, notwithstanding the abundance of means left by this man, and the oft-repeated promise of reward, he was obliged to content himself with the remembrance of the good he had done! The widow, meanwhile, satisfied her conscience by pleading poverty, and marrying in a few months her 'hired man!'

"The world surely should be grateful, in consideration of the fact that ministers have so implicitly obeyed the apostolic injunction, and added to their '*knowledge*, *patience*.'"

But it should not be inferred that this was his uniform experience on occasions of this kind. His widow, in speaking of his implicit confidence in the Father of mercies, says:

"I very early learned to admire — shall I say venerate and even adore? — his unlimited confidence in God, and in the benevolence of his providence. To him God never seemed as a far-off being, a sort of infinite abstraction, but as a present help, a sympathizing Father. Every favor which he received, no matter how trifling, or by whom offered, he gratefully acknowledged as an expression of the divine favor. I could record many instances, but one or two will suffice to illustrate what I mean.

"After furnishing our house, and gathering around us some of the necessaries of life, we found that we had entirely exhausted our available means, and knew not where to turn. While pondering upon this subject, he repeatedly affirmed that God would provide for us. And sure enough, as the evil began to be felt, a messenger arrived from P. with a request that he would repair thither to attend a funeral. The day was very cold, the snow deep and drifted, and the roads almost impassable. It was late in the evening when he returned. He was much fatigued with his journey, having been obliged much of the way to walk, and to hold his sleigh from being capsized by the drifts.

"An aged member of our parish was there when he arrived home. He was a man who enjoyed the reputation of being wealthy. He appeared considerably moved by the recital of my husband's hardships during the day, and, with apparent sympathy, inquired if when he went abroad to attend funerals he ever received any compensation for his services. He replied that he did sometimes, and, "suiting the action to the word," he took from his

pocket what had been presented him that day. It proved to be five dollars. Then turning to me, he said, 'I told you the Lord would provide for us.' The next day he was called some ten or twelve miles in an opposite direction, to attend another funeral. On returning he found the same friend present, and, with sincere gratitude to God, displayed another five dollar present, and thus appealed to his guest to rejoice with him.

"In this, too, he saw the hand of God, renewed the expression of his confidence in him as a present help in trouble, and ever after, when emergencies threatened and I inquired for resources, he replied, 'Remember *that instance*, how God provided a way for us then, and be not faithless but believing.'

"The part the parishioner acted remains yet to be told. A present which James received from one of his society, consisting of some sixty pounds of ham and bacon, had been related to the old gentleman, and now *ten* dollars had been added! With a *zeal for the society*, worthy of all commendation, he said, after some preliminaries, 'I think, Bro. Cook, as you are employed by the society, it would be but right that you should credit the amount received in these cases on your salary, and thus benefit the society.' It is needless to say that Mr. Cook made him ashamed of this suggestion before he left, and that he never recurred to the subject again. His friend was a man whom he often described as a 'very good man, but subject to *fits of pinching a cent*.'"

Very soon after Mr. Cook commenced his stated ministry in Churchville, there was much opposition to the doctrine he preached, among the dominant sects, which

displayed itself in misrepresentation and abuse — opposition to which its adversaries were no strangers in those days. This stimulated the friends of the cause to greater activity in its behalf, and in a short time the meetings of Mr. Cook were numerously attended. "The zeal which he felt," says Dr. Gage, "was soon imparted to his congregation, and, in the latter part of the same year, preparations were made for the erection of a house of public worship." In this was a promise of a better day coming. The members of any society that can be induced to engage in such a work, to contribute of their means to build for themselves a temple unto the Lord, are, to say the least, in a hopeful condition. Doing nothing for themselves, and complaining that the Lord is slack concerning his promise to do for them as members of the household of faith, is but the sure prophecy of evil to any association claiming to be Christian. The Lord have mercy upon the young minister that is blessed with such a charge, especially if he is content with it.

Arrangements were completed for the erection of a church, and Mr. Cook was earnestly solicited to remove to Churchville, that he might the more conveniently counsel with the society, and assist in obtaining the subscriptions for the work. He accordingly left the excellent home afforded him at Father Sheldon's in April, 1839, and engaged board in the family of E. P. Davis, Esquire, a prominent member of the Churchville society.

In a country society, wasted by inaction, it is not an easy matter to raise by subscription a sufficient amount of money to build a church. Composed, as such socie-

ties in our order usually are, of persons of limited means, there must be, on the part of him who attempts such a work, a power of appeal sufficient to counteract the force of habit confirmed and cherished, — a habit of counting the profits of every transaction before engaging in it,—and to create a public sentiment which looks to the spiritual good of the race, rather than to material and personal benefits, for the return of money invested. Mr. Cook possessed this power in an eminent degree. Though never distinguished as a shrewd financier in personal matters, he was deservedly popular as a manager of the pecuniary affairs of a society, and had indeed few equals in delivering such a charge from that "*body of death*," a debt!

In Churchville, nearly the whole labor of obtaining the subscription for a new church devolved upon him. Yet, anticipating the result, he did it with alacrity and cheerfulness, and, with a devout heart, praised God when his efforts were crowned with success.

Seeing their way clear, the committee of the society went forward and contracted for the erection of a church. It was to be built of wood, forty-four by thirty-four feet. The contractor framed it, and in due time it was ready to be "*raised*." This term describes a process which few city people have any conception of. A sort of vandalism obtains in cities, which confines the glory of raising a new building to the carpenters, and a few laboring men, whom they pay to assist. But such barbarous customs had not yet received the sanction of Churchville, or the region round about. A *raising day* there was a great day, no matter how small the edifice

to be erected. The neighbors expected to be invited, and felt slighted if in this they were disappointed. And when a meeting-house was to be raised, the invitation must not only be universal, but every man and boy felt it a sort of religious obligation to be present. On ordinary occasions, such as the raising of a house or a barn, the company present expected to be honored with some expression of regard on the part of the owner of the building, some testimonial of gratitude, which was usually presented in the form of a glass of whiskey, punch, or other stimulant. How much more honor and gratitude were expected from the proprietors of a church by those who volunteered their services to raise it as a temple to the Lord.

But, not to dwell on customs fast becoming obsolete, suffice it to say, that such was the refinement of civilization, and such the devotion to the venerable customs of the fathers, that not a few of the society were puzzled to understand a proposition, from the pastor, to dispense with liquor on the occasion of the raising. Especially was this the case among the elder members, who were among the most liberal contributors to the building. They declared that a sufficient number of hands to raise the frame of a meeting-house could not be gathered for that purpose, if it was understood they were to have no liquor on the occasion. But, notwithstanding this formidable array of influence in favor of established customs, the young pastor resolutely set his face against the use of liquor, against a fashion always before, on similar occasions, honored in the town. He reproved the spirit which bows in subserviency to a vile custom; called up-

on the fathers to dismiss their fears about a deficiency of help, and to engage in the nobler work of providing a generous collation for all that assisted in the labor to be performed. He reminded them of the productiveness of their farms, and expatiated upon the delight they would feel in feeding the multitude that should come up to their help on this joyous occasion. His appeals prevailed, the collation was prepared; on the day of raising a multitude indeed was there; the work was quietly, cheerfully performed; the bountiful repast was gratefully accepted as a substitute for the *ardent*, and, with great unanimity, it was pronounced the best *raising* that the citizens of Churchville had ever known.

But this triumph was not achieved without much effort on the part of Mr. Cook. So deeply agitated was his mind, when there were some doubts of his success, that one night, after retiring to rest, he aroused the whole family where he boarded by his somnambulic utterances on the subject: "Can't have a meeting-house raised, to worship God in, without *whiskey!* — good old whiskey! God forbid! never! no never!" * * * * *

This house was completed and dedicated to the service of God, November 20, 1839. Rev. N. Brown, in noticing the dedication in the Magazine and Advocate, says: "The dedicatory sermon was preached by Rev. J. M. Cook, pastor of the society in Churchville. * * * The sermon did high honor to the youthful pastor. It breathed a pure spirit, and was delivered in a fervent and eloquent manner. The whole services were peculiarly interesting and highly satisfactory. Many of our limit-

arian brethren were present, and seemed generally gratified with the services. * * * *

"Our friends in this place seem in good spirits and much encouraged. They have prospered much under the labors of Bro. Cook. A little more than a year ago this society was in a cold and listless condition. It has now, thank God, awakened from its slumbers, and put on the strength of Zion." * * *

Notwithstanding the cry of alarm, which has been raised by some fearful souls, in regard to the "*desolation*" of our spiritual Zion in "Western New York," yet it must be acknowledged that, so far as the societies in Churchville and Chili are concerned, "peace dwells within their walls, and prosperity within their palaces."

The year 1839 was signalized by another event in the life of Mr. Cook — an event which exerted no inconsiderable influence over his whole subsequent career. At his first meeting in Chili, he saw a young lady whose personal appearance made a very favorable impression upon his mind. On going to Chili to live, in seeking a boarding-place he was directed to the house of the father of this young lady. Here he remained for a few weeks, and on becoming acquainted with her, he concluded that her personal charms were by no means her highest recommendation. During the following summer, she engaged in teaching a district school in the town, and he removed to the home of Benjamin Sheldon, where he remained until April, 1839, when, as before stated, he went to Churchville. The intimacy of the youthful pair very soon ripened into an ardent affection, and on the 30th of May, 1839, they were united in marriage. The

writer was called upon, during a visit to Rochester to attend the State Convention, to solemnize the nuptials, and while yet a bachelor to advise them in regard to the duties and responsibilities of the married life.

On the morning after their marriage they started for Niagara Falls, where they were most politely received and most hospitably entertained by General Whitney, at the Cataract House. They were commended to the favor of General Whitney by a letter from Lothrop Cooke, Esquire, of Lewiston. He spared no pains to make their stay at the Falls pleasant and agreeable; volunteered his services as a guide to direct them to the most favorable points of observation; crossed over with them to the Canada shore, and explained to them the reminiscences and associations connected with the various localities around that wonder of the world. When they called for their bill, they were informed by the bar-keeper, with the utmost delicacy, that it had been paid.

On their return, the party reached Clarendon in time to be present the last day of the session of the Niagara Association, and the following day arrived home.

The meeting-house was rapidly progressing, and much of the care and oversight of the work was entrusted to the pastor. This, together with his parochial duties; visits to the sick, in both his societies; funerals, often at a distance; marriages, and the annual meetings of the several associations held, during the summer, in the region round about, which meetings he seldom failed to attend, kept him constantly employed, and severely taxed his energies, and in a measure impaired his health. He shrunk from no amount of labor which he felt called

upon to perform. "Where he thought there was a possibility of doing good, he went," says his widow, "and wherever he went, he believed good was done. Nearly every Sabbath he preached, at five o'clock, P. M., a third discourse, shrinking from no distance which he could make during the interval which elapsed between the close of his regular service and that hour." She adds:

"I wish I could give an incident here, which made a deep impression on the mind of James, and which he ever afterwards remembered, as a painful but instructive lesson. The society in Churchville had for several years been indebted to a former pastor for services rendered. The decided practical tone of Mr. Cook's preaching had stimulated the slumbering conscience of the trustees, and they requested him to exchange with this brother, who resided some forty miles distant, that they might have a convenient opportunity of paying what they owed to a needy minister. He was ready to comply with their request, on condition that they would see that the brother to be benefited by the exchange fulfilled an appointment at five o'clock which he had in a neighboring town. The condition was cheerfully accepted, and he started out on his somewhat tedious and expensive journey.

"James had preached several times in the church where the brother was to go, and much interest was felt in his labors, and the prospect of organizing a new society there cheered and animated his heart. He was therefore very particular to arrange matters so as to have no disappointment.

"The brother came, preached, received his due with interest, and forgot the five o'clock appointment! Two

weeks after, we started immediately after service at home to go to L. As we approached the accustomed place of worship, a brother B. hailed us with the salutation,

"'Which way now, Bro. Cook?'

"'To meeting, of course,' was the ready reply; and he added, 'are you not going?'

"'As we had no preacher two weeks ago, no appointment was given out, and of course there will be no meeting to-day.'

"This was the first notice he had had of the disappointment, and the effect it had upon his mind was to me truly surprising. He immediately said, 'All hopes of a society here are thus blasted, and that too by the indifference of a brother whom at my own expense I have travelled eighty miles to accommodate!' And then, turning to Bro. B., he says, 'It's of no use; the friends will never rally in the same spirit again, and we must give up.'

"He was urged to leave an appointment, and did so — *only to confirm his presentiments of evil.*

"From that moment he never could tolerate the habit, which prevails with some ministers, of disappointing a congregation, when it is possible to avoid it. Neither storm nor fatigue prevented his attendance on all his appointments. And I have known him to leave a sick bed, where prudence demanded that he should remain, rather than disappoint those who were hungering for the bread of life."

After his marriage, in arranging for the future, Mr. Cook thought house-keeping, with its attendant cares, would interfere with his official duties, and prevent his

accustomed devotion to these duties. But "my domestic habits had been too active" (writes his companion) "to enjoy boarding, notwithstanding we boarded with one of the best of families. We therefore concluded to commence house-keeping, and in November we found ourselves very comfortably settled in our 'own hired house.' James enjoyed the change quite as much as myself, and never after talked or thought of enhancing his happiness by seeking exemption from the cares incident to house-keeping. No man esteemed his home more highly than did he. He delighted in the very cares he once dreaded, and found them among the sources of his purest pleasure. Our home was about three quarters of a mile from church, the distance was soon made, and the ride never seemed tedious.

"I remember nothing of a remarkable character which transpired during the following winter. We were surrounded by many devoted friends, who knew our wants, and often visited us with valuable expressions of their sympathy, with 'material' aid in the form of generous presents.

"A protracted meeting was in progress in Churchville, and James availed himself of every opportunity which he could command from other and pressing duties to attend. It was at one of these meetings (and perhaps you have heard him relate the incident) that, as he was about to enter the meeting-house, some of the more zealous saints attempted to close the door upon him, and succeeded in crowding him against the door-post, where, notwithstanding his struggles to advance, they held him so firmly

that, in his own expressive phrase, he '*began to see stars.*'

"In the spring of 1840, the house we rented was sold, and we were obliged to seek another residence. My father proffered us the gratuitous use of one of his, situated in the town of Gates, near Chili, and with much reluctance we took our leave of Churchville as a residence.

"Our new home was very pleasant. We had a garden, pasture for a horse and cow in summer, and meadow yielding sufficient hay to keep them in winter, with an additional privilege of cultivating what vegetables we needed. This was deemed a great favor. And so much superior to the dread of care had my husband now risen, that he esteemed it a luxury to cultivate with his own hands what in innocent pride he declared to be 'the best garden in town.' He shrunk not from the toil of 'haying,' of anything needful to be done. What his hands found to do, he did it with his might, often going beyond his strength and overtaxing his energies.

"About the middle of summer, worn down with his unwearied efforts, both mental and physical, his whole system debilitated, he was attacked with that terrible disease, ague and fever. From this he suffered much, often extremely, for several months. At times he attempted to conquer it by exertion, but soon wearied of the unequal contest. Then he would betake himself to drugs. But the most trifling effort would bring on a chill and its attendant miseries. Preaching was necessarily suspended. At length the disease assumed a dropsical form, and his physician, together with his more intimate friends, began to be very doubtful of his recovery.

I was advised to apprize his mother of his dangerous illness, and did so.

"But it seems his time had not yet come. He always thought he was greatly indebted to his physician, under God, for his recovery. And the name of Dr. Clark (now of Rockford, Illinois) was ever afterwards cherished in the most grateful remembrance." * * *

"And it may be mentioned here as a circumstance worthy to be remembered, and very creditable to the professional courtesy of Dr. Clark, that, though a member of the Presbyterian church, whose pastor had been the uncompromising opponent of James from the very commencement of his ministry, he declined taking any compensation for his faithful and unwearied efforts in his behalf, and expressed himself as abundantly satisfied with the opportunity which had been afforded him to benefit one of the clerical profession.

"His disease gradually yielded to the treatment which he received, and in the month of October he was enabled to resume his duties as pastor. Still it is believed that he never entirely recovered from this sickness. His constitution was impaired, and the seeds of a premature decay were evidently sown.

"He had also on this occasion to acknowledge his gratitude to his societies in Chili and Churchville for the courtesy which they very generously extended to him. They continued his salary; cheered and encouraged him by their sympathy, and thus revealed to him new depths of their regard and affection. For the want of such expressions on the part of societies to which they minister, how many young men have been disheartened under the

first visitations of adversity, and abandoned the ministry for other pursuits ! "

In the summer of 1841, Mr. Cook began to consider very seriously the propriety of closing his pastoral connection with the society in Chili. Nearly four years he had been with them; and his preparations for the pulpit, during that time, had cost him much labor. Chili and Churchville were so contiguous to each other that it was like preaching to the same congregation; and hence he felt called upon to bring forth something new every Sabbath. By continuing his labors in Churchville one half of the time, and finding employment elsewhere for the other half, at a greater distance than Chili, he might diminish the labor of preparing for the desk, and thus have an opportunity to recruit his wasted energies. His physician advised him to this course, and he finally decided upon it.

As soon as his determination became known to the public, he received letters from various societies, inviting him to visit them, with a view of settlement. But in the autumn of 1841, he accepted an invitation from the society in Perrinton (Fairport), and commenced his stated ministry there in November of the same year.

It was about this time that Mr. Cook visited Newark, N. J., at the instance of the Rev. I. D. Williamson, then of New York, and preached there two Sabbaths. The society in Newark at the time of this visit were about completing negotiations for the sale of their meeting-house to an orthodox congregation. This fact was made known to him, together with the train of disheartening circumstances which led to the project. Before

leaving New York he resolved to arrest these negotiations, disappoint the exulting opponents of his faith, and secure the church to those who had contributed to its erection. He directed his efforts to this end, and was successful. His pulpit labors, and his personal interviews with the members of the society, were designed and eminently calculated to lead every friend of Universalism to scorn an act that would inevitably subject him to the taunts and reproaches of his opponents, and bring a lasting disgrace upon the cause in the neighborhood. He was not disappointed in the result of his efforts. The society, inspired with new confidence in their ability to retain the house in their own possession, suddenly terminated negotiations for its sale, and with one accord blessed God for this stranger's interference. After he removed to Providence, he had an exchange with Bro. Balch, and a third service at Newark, at which time two or three prominent members of the society came forward, and, taking him by the hand, said to him, with hearts full of gratitude, "*You are the very man that saved our church for us.*"

In the original organization of the society in Churchville, the only condition of membership was an annual contribution to the funds of the society. This was a very objectionable feature, as viewed by Mr. Cook. He therefore resolved upon a change. He proposed the same conditions that had been so wisely introduced into the constitution of the society in Chili, viz.: "Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, and a character worthy of such a faith." He found some opposition to the measure, but finally suc-

ceeded in overcoming it, and the society was reorganized upon this basis, April 29, 1840. As might have been anticipated, the result of this change served to promote a deeper interest among his hearers in things of a spiritual nature, and to beget in their minds a sense of their responsibility as the professed followers of Jesus Christ.

From this time forward his labors in Churchville were characterized by an earnest zeal for the spiritual advancement of his charge. In the commencement of his ministry, opposition seems to have betrayed him into a course of doctrinal and controversial preaching. But he had now learned that to accomplish the highest object of his mission, as a preacher of the everlasting Gospel, he must needs go beyond the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and instruct his hearers in the great practical duties of life. And few men were capable of making more powerful appeals in behalf of Christian attainments than he.

We have in our possession several incidents which serve to illustrate the power of his appeals on various occasions; but the length of this chapter forbids the introduction of more than one or two in this place. An intelligent lady, speaking of his early efforts, says: "I never heard any man preach with such perfect demonstration of the spirit and of power, as did Mr. Cook. Every word he uttered, at times, seemed to sink into the very depths of my soul. To me he spoke as one having authority, and not as ordinary preachers. His words made a deeper impression upon my heart than those of any other. Never shall I forget the day set apart to receive the names of such as desired to unite with the

society. (The duty of Christians to unite together for mutual improvement was his theme on this occasion.) Every word he uttered seemed to thrill through my whole spiritual being. I could neither control my emotions, nor willingly consent to remain silent under their powerful influence. For the first time in my life, I wanted to speak in public. It seemed to me that I could convince every one there of his duty to God and man, by simply giving utterance to the emotions awakened in my soul by the appeals of the pastor."

Another incident showing the power of his preaching is given by Mrs. G. She says:

"In the summer of 1841, he exchanged pulpit services with Bro. Sawyer, of Clarendon. A gentleman from Kendall went out to hear him preach, and was deeply interested in his forenoon discourse, on the text, John 8: 21, "Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go ye cannot come." But in the afternoon, he entered the church just as Mr. C. was repeating his text, "My Father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?" A strange significance instantly attached to these words in the mind of the gentleman, and he paused to listen to a repetition of them in the peculiar and impressive tones of the speaker. He waited with more intense interest for the exposition and application of them, and so completely was he absorbed in the discourse, that he was utterly unconscious of standing, until the last *amen* reminded him of his position, and of his somewhat awkward appearance during the entire service."

This gentleman was no stranger to the writer of the above extract, and it is probable that her *peculiar* rela-

tion to him forbid her saying that he was an eminent physician and possessed of a cultivated mind.

I will only add here, in conclusion, that this power, which, at this early period of his ministry, he so often exhibited, was not derived from the study of books designed to teach the eloquence of the schools, but from an earnest and implicit faith in the principles of the Gospel of Christ, — was not attributable to "the wisdom of words," but to the unction of the spirit dwelling richly in his own soul.

CHAPTER XV.

AN INCIDENT.

During his residence in Chili a circumstance occurred to which he often alluded as illustrative of the terrible power of that faith which recognizes as a heaven-revealed truth the doctrine of endless misery. There are, doubtless, many who assent to this doctrine, who may think it taught in the Bible, and necessary to be preached as a terror to evil-doers, and yet who never fear the doom which it represents, either for themselves or their friends. If they are as yet alienated from the life of God, and reckless of their obligations to his law, they hope and expect to repent ere it is too late, ere death closes their probation, and find acceptance with the Redeemer at last. If their friends are exposed to this fate now, are still pursuing the pleasures of sin, and thoughtless of duty and of God, they easily persuade themselves that, by some fortunate dispensation of Providence, some special moving of the Holy Spirit, they will be arrested in their folly, and, before the door of mercy is closed, find some space for repentance. And even in cases where the *disinterested* might fail to discover, either in the faith or life of these friends, a single satisfactory evidence of their conversion to God; where, indeed, it

was perfectly obvious to all save friends that death had preceded repentance, *they* could cull from the numberless expressions of their lips some of the utterances of a soul aspiring to a higher life, or penitent for the past; could recall virtues, kindness, charity, sympathy in affliction, and a thousand nameless graces, and, on these expressions and virtues, build hopes of immortal joy for the departed. And we have reason to thank God that the instincts of humanity, in most cases, are sufficient to resist the desolating power of those theological dogmas which are born of the wisdom of this world. Grateful should we be that the prophecies of the heart, as a general rule, are more readily accepted in faith than the fearful prophecies of human creeds; that hope triumphs over a dismal belief, and sheds her own genial radiance over all the realms through which the soul is destined to wander. But there are some marked and melancholy exceptions; some souls in which the instincts of humanity have been utterly blasted by the power of superstition; in which faith and not hope colors the future,— faith in the creeds of men. There are *a few* among the multitude who *feel* that the doctrine of endless misery is indeed a dread reality; that if sinners, though idols of their hearts, die unconverted, they must sink deep in the dismal gulf of unending despair. And these unfortunate souls usually live on in wretchedness, dragging out a miserable existence, or else, to rid themselves of the burden of life, with their own hands put a period to their hopeless forebodings. One of its most distinguished advocates in this country*, referring

* Rev. Albert Barnes, Philadelphia.

to the prospect which this doctrine opens to the benevolent soul, exclaims, with evident sincerity, "It is all *dark! dark!! dark!!!*" And the eloquent Saurin had previously borne a like testimony to its influence, in those remarkable words, "*I cease to wonder that it has made some melancholy and others mad.*"

The circumstance to which reference has been made exhibited most forcibly the power of this doctrine. On the 10th of March, 1840, in the vicinity of Churchville, the Rev. Mr. C., of the Baptist church, was called to solemnize the marriage nuptials of William Peters and Mary Gleason. Mr. Peters was a young man of excellent character, generous and noble-hearted. He was consequently much respected by his acquaintances, loved by his more intimate friends, and idolized by his young and beautiful wife. He could not, however, fully sympathize in all the forms of religious faith to which his companion in childhood had subscribed; could not conscientiously attach himself to the Baptist communion, and was, therefore, looked upon by *her* pastor as an unbeliever, needing conversion to save his soul from the wrath of God. He had occasionally heard my brother preach, and had spoken favorably of his labors to his intended, before their marriage.

"Mary," says the subject of these pages, "was a young, beautiful and lovely girl. She knew not what sorrow was. Her hopes pointed to a bright and joyous future, stored with peace and prosperity,—a home on earth radiant with love, and a home in heaven for all the heart was wont to bless with its affections here. Her mother was a member of the Baptist church, and took

special pains to indoctrinate the mind of her daughter with the dogmas of her creed. In this she was successful; and she had the satisfaction of seeing that daughter, in the very morning of her life, an accepted member of the same church with herself.

"Three weeks from the day they were married, they retired at night in usual health. The morning following broke beautifully in the east, but as its faint rays stole quietly through the window of their little cottage they fell softly upon the pale face of the dead. William Peters lay cold and lifeless by the side of his young wife. She, arousing from sweet slumbers, saw the last contortions of his features, but his spirit had fled. With difficulty could she persuade herself that what her opening eyes beheld was indeed a reality. But, alas! it was *too* real! He was gone — gone forever from the earth. But whither? The warnings of her minister against being 'unequally yoked with unbelievers,' together with the fearful suggestions of her creed, came rushing into her mind, and the thought that he had died unconverted shot through her throbbing heart as an arrow of despair.

"The first throe of anguish passed, the voice of sympathy and affection was heard, soothing her grief, and encouraging her to rise superior to her doubts and fears, — in view of the known excellences of his character to cherish hope of his salvation, and to await in patience the hour of his funeral, when, from the lips of her pastor, she should receive such instruction as would realize to her the significance of the promise, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'

"In due time the hour arrived, and with it came the

professed servant of Him who was sent to 'comfort all that mourn.' A few cold words passed with the mourners, and he was ready for the work of *desolation*, which it would seem he had resolved to perform. Judge the feelings of that widowed bride when he announced his text, 'And the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in to the marriage, and the door was shut,' — and proceeded to the application which he designed to make of it. He referred to the bright and joyous scenes so recently witnessed at the wedding festivities, as if to mock the present woe with more vivid memories of the past, and then said, with a heartlessness becoming his creed, 'The bridegroom, Christ, has now come; the young man was not ready, and against him the door of mercy is closed,— ay, forever closed!'

"Proceeding from premises thus assumed, he exhorted the young to take warning by his fate, and flee from the wrath to come, lest against them also the door of mercy should be shut, and they find themselves cast into outer darkness, where were wailing and gnashing of teeth.

"And these were the words of consolation which that stricken soul, crushed to the earth by her sudden bereavement, received at the lips of her pastor. And who can wonder that she deemed them more than she could bear? As she dwelt upon them, she felt her hopes giving way, and despair, with its leaden feet, creeping over her bleeding spirit. Half insensible from the excess of her grief, she suffered herself to be led to the grave, and, as the lifeless form was lowered into its cold bosom, the wild rolling eye spoke more eloquently than words the near

approach of her utter despair. As they retired from the grave, she leaned her head upon her mother's bosom, and, with an earnestness which bespoke the solicitude of her soul, she cried, 'Mother, *has* William gone to hell?' Her mother was silent,—her creed was in the ascendant. The minister, though hearing the fearful inquiry, was silent too. His answer preceded the question. This silence only increased her apprehensions, and again she exclaimed, 'O, mother! mother! has William gone to hell? If he has, I want to go there too!' Ah, yes, she was willing to suffer the infinite wrath of God, willing to ride upon the stormy billows of liquid fire, for the sake of an eternal companionship with the choice of her youth!

"Two months rolled away, during which time she found no peace of mind. If occasional glimpses of sunshine were caught by the spirit, they cheered her but for a moment, and then gave place to the deepening shadows of despair. Her friends, acting on the advice of her physician, proposed a journey with her, but her heart clung to the grave of her buried hopes.

"She had heard her husband speak of my meetings, and I, too, had heard of her despair. She sent me a note, stating 'that she was a mourner, that Christ had promised to bless such, but she had not been able to find the blessing;' and then added, 'If I can find no peace, no consolation in the Gospel, I desire to die; to be laid by my companion until the morning of the resurrection, and then that God in mercy will blot us from existence.' She concluded by expressing a desire that I would preach

another funeral sermon from the same text, and explain the chapter from which it was selected.

"On reading this note, I was moved beyond expression, and earnestly did I pray God that I might be the humble instrument in his hands of relieving her troubled soul. I returned an answer, expressing my willingness to comply with her request, and fixing a day to make the attempt.

"That day arrived. Mary came, her father and mother came, her brothers and sisters came, and many of the Baptist members came also. They all wept as she approached the altar; they all desired that she might find peace. And gratefully, not presumptuously, do I say it, I verily believe that God's spirit assisted me to speak on that blessed day. I explained the text, and showed from the whole tenor of the connection that the time when the bridegroom was to have come transpired during the life of some who listened to the personal ministry of Christ; transpired before some of these tasted death; before that generation passed away. In the afternoon, I brought forward the testimony in favor of universal salvation. As I spoke, the cloud seemed gradually passing from her spirit, and her countenance grew brighter and brighter, revealing the quiet return of hope, and indicating its sure triumph over the dark foreshadowings of her creed. At last I came to the text, 'All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him,' when a smile lighted up her glowing features, and in an instant she exclaimed, in accents that thrilled every heart in that vast assembly, 'Yes,

mother, William shall return and worship before God! Glory to God in the highest!' A loud *amen* echoed from many lips, and a silent response came from all hearts.

"The meeting was closed, and from that hour hope and consolation reigned in her soul."

I have given this lengthy extract from the manuscript of my brother, with a few verbal alterations, believing that it would be more acceptable in his words than in my own. It speaks for itself, and shows the man in his public ministry.

CHAPTER XVI.

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Few men ever attain to the age of thirty and have it to say that they have never fallen a victim to some unaccountable passion or prejudice; some strange freak of fancy or faith; some mysterious spell of avarice or ambition. And some minds are peculiarly liable to all these influences. Mr. Cook was not exempt from them. His conclusions were hastily formed, often from some sudden impulse, seldom from serious meditation on a course that lay before him. His executive forces demanded occasionally some new field for exercise; and he rushed into the one that his excited imagination told him promised most for the interest of that cause to which he had unreservedly consecrated the energies of his life. Hence his rashness betrayed him into difficulties — difficulties, too, of such a nature that all his energies and perseverance were put to the test to extricate himself from them.

He probably never made so palpable a mistake as when he gave himself up to the idea that he was capable of overcoming the obstacles which lie in the way of establishing a religious journal, devoted exclusively to the interests of Universalism, in Western New York. He seems not to have stopped to consider that the effort

had been made by men of more experience and more capital than he could at that time boast; had been made and had failed, signally failed. He disregarded the lesson which the recital of their disappointment, mortification and pecuniary sacrifice was designed and (one would think) calculated to impress on the minds of persons occasionally afflicted with aspirations for the distinction and *emolument* which attach to the office of an editor and proprietor. He was not ignorant of the fact, that an old established sheet, published in the centre of the state, had its admirers all around him, and was likely to retain them, despite all opposition or rivalry. He knew, too, that in the city of New York there was another ably conducted journal, to which those who had any special objections to the Magazine and Advocate might turn, and find a paper worthy of their patronage and support. And yet, either closing his eyes to all these considerations, or in the blindness of a confidence which found its vindication occasionally only in that indomitable perseverance which was cheerfully accorded to him by all his acquaintance, he embarked in the hazardous enterprise of publishing the Western Luminary, and issued the first number thereof, January 18, 1842.

It may be said in palliation of this blunder, that the enterprise did not originate with him. This, certainly, is some relief. By reference to the opening paragraph of the *Publishers' Notice*, with which the volume commences, I find the following words:

"At a general conference of Universalists, held in this city (Rochester) in September last, an organization was effected for the purpose of publishing a religious jour-

nal devoted to the interests of primitive Christianity, as held and defended by the Universalist denomination. But, after mature reflection, it has been deemed preferable for two or three brethren to assume the responsibility of furnishing the public with a paper, similar in spirit and character to the one then and there proposed; and we, the undersigned, *in accordance with the expressed wish of many brethren, have assumed that responsibility.*"

Associated with him in this enterprise was William Chase, Esq., a very worthy and inexperienced young man. Of the capital which they possessed I have never been informed, but am satisfied that it was inadequate to their undertaking.

The next paragraph announces the motives of these young men with sufficient clearness; and we therefore give it, with the simple remark, that, in anticipating *no pecuniary return the first year*, they displayed more foresight than in any other part of their undertaking. They say,

"That such a publication is actually *needed* in this section of the country, is admitted by our brethren generally. There are now comparatively few papers of the kind taken by our liberal friends in this western territory, not more than *one*, probably, among *twenty* Universalists; and there has been for three months past a general call from all quarters for the issuing of the one contemplated to be published here. *We do not, however*, undertake the present publication with the *expectation of reaping the least pecuniary advantage from it, at least the present year;* but with a determination

only to avail ourselves of the means, which we believe are within our reach, of enlisting a more general engagedness in the great and good cause of Gospel truth and righteousness; and, if we are favored with the patronage which we have been encouraged to expect, we shall be sustained in our laudable undertaking, and be instrumental of effecting some degree of good in promoting the truth and practice of pure religion."

Had not this announcement been distinctly made, I am inclined to think that some persons, knowing the state of feeling in Western New York about this time, would very naturally have been induced to ascribe the enterprise to somewhat different motives from those professed. The truth is, that *one man*, by the publication of a Universalist paper, in the State of New York, had accumulated what in that region was deemed a handsome fortune. But this result was only achieved by the most rigid economy, by industry and perseverance, and by physical and mental toil which well-nigh cost him his life, and which few men, in any department of society, would have been able to sustain. And not a few of his brethren (ignorant of these conditions of *his* success), looking upon the *glorious* result, more than half believed that, if ever they could write themselves down "EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR," their toils might then cease, and fortune would come to them and solicit the acceptance of her golden stores. Under this delusion, papers sprung up, one after another, in various parts of the state, and, after doling out a miserable existence, whose only glory was its brevity, died unmourned, and oblivion now rests upon their very names.

The same is true, to a certain extent, of New England One publisher has become rich, not alone by the receipts for his paper, nor yet for his books, nor yet, again, by the emoluments of his offices as president of a bank and of railroads, but, to a great extent, by the gradual rise in the value of his real estate, by profitable investments, and by a personal oversight of all his concerns, requiring an amount of labor which few men are willing to perform for the sake of wealth, and behold the result! How many papers have been born of the idea, stimulated by the contemplation of his fortunes, and by tracing that fortune to the glory of being the editor and proprietor of the Trumpet! It is gratifying to the friends of the denomination to know that the *mania* for publishing papers, created among the brethren by a few such examples (not yet sufficiently understood), is beginning to subside, and that most of them are willing to be admonished, in the incipient stages of an occasional publishing fever, by the general rule, rather than suffer themselves to be involved in ruin by these few exceptions.

But I have reason to believe that Mr. Cook, in this enterprise, was governed more by a desire to promote the interests of the cause which he so devotedly loved, than by any visions of wealth which met his gaze in the future. He had reason to suppose that he should be sustained in the undertaking, and saved from any great amount of pecuniary sacrifice. But in this he was doomed to disappointment. "Whenever I am inclined to dwell upon this portion of his life," writes his widow, "the solemn fact will intrude itself upon my memory, that many of those brethren who most earnestly and perseveringly

persuaded James to assume the responsibility of publishing that paper, were among the first to forsake him, when, having embarked nearly all he had in the enterprise, he most needed their encouragement and coöperation. Many of them graciously received the paper on condition that it could be forwarded to them free of charge; but this was the extent of their sympathy. They neither contributed to its columns, nor in any other way labored to extend its patronage. However, this 'peril among brethren' did not dishearten him, but rather stimulated him to greater exertion. It was not his custom to succumb to disappointment or adversity. He had taken hold of the plough, and he was not disposed to look back. Others might falter; might dread the darkness that deepened over his prospects; might murmur, if not at the allotments of Providence, at the instability of human friendships; but his was a nobler mission. He toiled on; struggled against the tide of unexpected ills; stemmed that tide; and, finally, in a great measure, 'conquered peace for his own soul.'" She continues:

"This was with James a year of excessive toil. When you consider that he was pastor of two different societies, the one ten miles east and the other fourteen miles west of Rochester; that nearly every Sabbath, during the summer, after service in these societies, he preached a lecture at five o'clock in the vicinity, requiring an additional ride of from five to ten miles to reach his extra appointment; that he was frequently called to travel these long roads, during the week, to attend funerals, weddings and society meetings; to visit the sick, to yield

to the demand for pastoral calls, and to lecture occasionally on temperance, or some other kindred reform; that he attended all the meetings of the associations and conferences held within the limits of Western New York, which, with the time spent in travelling to and from, usually occupied from three to five days; that, even during these occasions, so grateful to his feelings, when permitted to enter into the spirit of the services, he was obliged to forego this pleasure, for purposes of business,— active in the councils — busy during the recess of services in obtaining the names of subscribers to his paper, or appointing agencies; that he lectured often on temperance — delivered an oration on the Fourth of July at the request of several towns, that united for its proper observance; — when you consider these facts, and remember that, besides the labors which they indicate, he had all the care and oversight of the Luminary, coupled with his domestic cares, and this, too, when he was but twenty-three years of age, you can form some idea of the amount of labor which he performed during this year. Often did his preparations for the Sabbath occupy him till twelve o'clock at night, and sometimes till three o'clock in the morning."

It seems strange, yet it is nevertheless true, that men involved in difficulties often plunge deeper in some wild scheme to extricate themselves from a condition they would no longer endure. And in the spring of 1842, Mr. Cook was just on the eve of engaging in such a scheme. He had learned that the Luminary was not likely to support itself, and thought to save a loss he could ill sustain by publishing a weekly paper, devoted to the interests of the Reforms of the day, and especially to the

cause of temperance. He had actually written a prospectus for such a paper, and was only saved from issuing it by the multiplicity of his other engagements. He and his friends afterwards had special cause for gratitude to God that he was saved from this most dangerous experiment.

I am indebted to the Rev. J. S. Brown, of Taunton, Mass., for the following communication, which will be read with interest, as it shows how, amidst difficulties, and despite them, he triumphed.

"TAUNTON, March 22d, 1853.

"BRO. COOK: — I first saw Rev. J. M. Cook in the month of June, 1842, at N. Bloomfield, at the meeting of the Ontario Association. This was some months subsequent to his purchase of the Western Luminary. He introduced the subject of that enterprise on that occasion. There I first heard him preach one of those stirring and effective sermons for which he became not a little distinguished. Then and there began our acquaintance, which grew into a permanent friendship, and was uninterrupted till the close of his life. Being then young, having just located as a preacher, I took deep interest in all that transpired.

"July 1, 1842, your brother called on me, and persuaded me to leave my first location in the ministry, to assist him in the office as proof-reader, and in selecting and writing for the paper, indeed, to take the general supervision of the same, as his residence was in Chili, and his duties, as pastor of two societies, made great demands upon his time. He was at that time preaching alternately at Churchville and Fairport; the former fourteen, and the latter ten miles

from the city. It was an occasion for great energy, and certainly for large hope and an unyielding firmness. To start and sustain a new paper in Western New York, at that time, was no money-making enterprise. A young man of limited means might well tremble in view of the responsibility. But a zeal for the truth urged him on, and night and day, with no previous experience, he fought against discouragements and battled with obstacles that would have disheartened ordinary men. The Magazine and Advocate, published at Utica, had had a wide circulation in the state, and its influence was, unfortunately for both papers and for the cause, unwisely brought to bear against the western enterprise. Still the Luminary gained ground. Subscribers were daily added; and, though managed by young men of little experience, and was sometimes not regular in its appearance, still there were many reasons why it was popular in many localities and useful in places where the Advocate had never been received. Bro. Cook had secured the services of Rev. C. Hammond and J. Whitney, to furnish the main body of the editorial. They wrote good articles. Communications came from many of the clergymen of the state. In the Luminary were published the earlier writings of Miss M. J. Church (now Mrs. W. E. Manly), a woman of rich native gifts, and whose productions were read with feelings akin to those inspired by the sweet lyre of the lamented Mrs. Scott. There first appeared the youthful efforts of Bros. E. W. Reynolds, author of the Career of Life, and O. W. Wright, translator of Cousin, and author of several able reviews. Indeed, it was the means of calling into light many earnest spirits who have since, in a

larger field, and in a more vigorous manner, fulfilled, in no small degree, the hopes which these youthful efforts inspired. All these gave the paper an interest, which, notwithstanding its necessary imperfections, accomplished much good in the region of its circulation. The subscription list was gradually increasing. But constant and rapid demands for paper, ink, printing, rent, finally for a new press, were made upon the young publisher. He found it necessary to draw upon his salary, all the sources of his income, and also upon his credit. When others would have failed, he persevered, till, upon the commencement of the second volume, he had placed the concern in better shape, changed its form, improved its appearance, and finally transferred the establishment to a company of clergymen, who purchased the several shares into which it was divided, he taking one or two shares and forming one of the company. It was conducted for a season by Rev. J. Chase, as agent and editor. It remained in this position till Bro. C. Hammond was called to Rochester by the Universalist society of that city. By the consent of a small fraction of the *firm*, Bro. H. took the list of subscribers, the press and type, the whole paraphernalia of the office, and managed the affair himself; while the self-sacrificing, public-spirited, unbusiness-like carelessness and easy good-nature of the company lost nearly all they had paid, save the gratification of seeing a Universalist paper in successful operation in Western New York. Bro. Hammond published a very good paper, for two or more years, which yielded, as he stated, a good profit all the time, and then sold it, at a good price, to be merged into the Western Evangelist at

Buffalo; since which time he has been engaged with spirits of the other world, and, I suppose, getting a respectable livelihood in editing books for those invisible authors.

"These are the imperfect outlines of Bro. Cook's relations with the Western Luminary. There are many reminiscences, by which I might illustrate his general character and great energy in this most trying period of his life. But I desire to be as brief as may be, and I will only remark that Bro. C., with a more mature experience, would, no doubt, have confined himself to the labors of his profession, for which his mind was more specially gifted, and where his native abilities were wholly unquestioned. There, too, his whole soul found its gravitating centre; for, while the days and nights of the agitated and perplexed publisher were vexed with the annoyances of the paper, eloquent sermons and prayers were going up, from his full soul, both when awake and when asleep! His theme was always the Gospel. There was something of a mysterious earnestness; it was not enthusiasm — it was not rant; there was a sublime moral perception, a clear, unquestioning faith, an irresistible assurance in his words, both when addressing large assemblies, as he often did, and when by my side, in the darkness of the solemn night, upon his bed, he prayed to the throne of grace, or gave a discourse upon the great truths of divine revelation. It was during these hours of sleep that he poured forth in fervid eloquence the strong convictions and rapturous emotions of his heart. None ever heard him but were deeply impressed with the clearness of his thoughts, and the sincerity and deep piety of his secret soul. And yet there would occa-

sionally, as in his public sermons, flash out those coruscations of wit, which would make a bed-fellow forget his drowsiness, if he had any inclination to sleep, as, very often, the unexpected flash would dart through the soul of a sleepy Christian on the Sabbath day; and, if that voice of thunder did not bring him to his feet, he was certain not to drowse again till the sermon closed.

"I have very many pleasing recollections of those strange phenomena which he exhibited in his sleep. Some, indeed, will provoke a smile, as memory calls them up from the buried past; others partake of the ludicrous, as every phase of human life would be reflected in the conversations of his somnambulic hours. But, when *religion* was the theme, there was ever a marked seriousness, which it would have been sacrilege to invade, and which seemed to pervade the very atmosphere of the silent night.—You ask me in reference to his difficulty with Bro. H. I was fortunately travelling in New England when that unhappy dispute occurred. But on my return, or soon after, I spent a night with him, as was my custom when at an association or conference, and hardly had he fallen asleep, ere I heard him whispering the name of Bro. H. Soon his conversation turned to the causes of their trouble, and he detailed every step of its progress, evidently feeling that he righteously triumphed in the contest, the merits of which I know but little about.

"The last time I saw Bro. Cook was at my own home, in Perry, N. Y., with his kind and amiable companion. He was then on a visit from Providence, and was at the meeting of the Genesee Association. It was a renewal of former friendship and a review of the past. As he

went into the old, rusty, awkward church, which had been standing quite too long, looking round upon its uncouth proportions,— not knowing the trials we had had for a new one, — he exclaimed, 'Bro. B., why upon earth do you stay in this old pen? *It has not even the form of godliness!*'

"And sure enough. But I am certain that the brother's friendship would congratulate me *now*, could he look upon the beautiful temple which rises gracefully toward heaven, but a few rods from the spot where we then stood. * * James may have had his faults. But he was my friend and brother sincere. He had a strong mind, and a holy purpose. There was that electric power in his nature that communicated life to all with which it came in contact. That he was ambitious, I very well know; but that the good of the Christian religion — the triumph of Universalism — overbore all personal ambition, and made him the successful minister of the faith, is a truth to which thousands who were witnesses to his 'labors of love' will cheerfully subscribe. Brother, I have complied with your request but too imperfectly.

"Affectionately thine,

"Rev. T. D. Cook. J. S. Brown."

About the first of November, finding that the distance of his residence from the office of the paper was often the occasion of delay to workmen, and sometimes of disappointment to those who called to see him on business, Mr. Cook resolved to move into the city of Rochester. He cast about for a house to live in, and finally concluded to purchase one; and thus, if possible, secure to

himself a home. This real estate operation, however, in process of time, involved him in some difficulties. After paying for it the price stipulated, he found that it was mortgaged for several hundred dollars, which mortgage must needs be cancelled in order to secure a clear title. But he finally succeeded in liquidating all demands against the estate, and left it to his widow and her fatherless charge, with a rental amounting to from seventy-five to a hundred dollars per annum. This, together with an income of about sixty dollars per annum, is all of worldly goods which a ministry of thirteen years secured to his family, to clothe and to educate them. And yet, some men with abundant means complain lest the minister should fare too well,— complain of the burden of "supporting" him; as if he were a *pauper*, supplicating, at the hands of those to whom he ministers, the miserable pittance of a livelihood, and under peculiar obligations of gratitude to every individual who contributes to the maintenance of the organization to which he sustains the relation of pastor! And these are the men most ready to denounce him as niggardly and mean, if he does not respond to every application for charity, and enter largely into all benevolent enterprises. They are equally bitter in their reproaches, if, yielding to the impulses of benevolence in his own soul, or to his convictions of duty as to what the minister ought to do, when appealed to for charity by the poverty of the widow, or the helplessness of the orphan, he distributes more than his limited resources will justify, and finds himself, at the close of succeeding years, involved deeper and deeper in the degradation of debt. Extravagance is no virtue. It should

be carefully avoided by the minister. But how many of these have been denounced by *meanness* as unworthy of the sacred office, because, in the salary stipulated, and sometimes unpaid, they found not sufficient to meet the necessary expenses of a family, and the ordinary demands of want and wretchedness, appealing to the deeper and holier sympathies of their nature, on the right hand and on the left, as they go forth to mingle with the world! I have no respect for the minister who squanders his income in the gratification of mere sensual desires; in ministering to his appetite, vitiated by indulgence, and pampered by luxuries; in extravagant outlays for personal decorations, either for himself or his family; or in lolling at fashionable watering-places, when his health is better served by devotion to his official duties. Nor would I pretend to justify the claim, that, in order to keep pace with the progress of the age, a minister must *necessarily* have leave of absence from his charge to test his courage upon the mighty deep — to stroll through the corrupt cities of the old world, a delighted spectator of the magnificence of wealth, and an indifferent observer of the squalid wretchedness of poverty-stricken districts — to stand in the Coliseum or St. Peter's, at Rome, only to go forth, and, parrot-like, to repeat the great words which pedantry has so often repeated as a tribute to the genius of the past represented in the ruins of the former and the preservation of the latter — to tread the outer courts of the mosque of Omar, and reflect that it now occupies the same site, made sacred to the descendants of Abraham by the divine presence in the temple of Solomon — to ascend Calvary or Olivet —

to thread the labyrinths of Jordan, or bathe in the famed waters of Galilee — to float on the Nile, dive into mummy pits, and climb the pyramids, at once the monuments of human weakness and of human power. No; such privileges, though not to be lightly esteemed, are not yet *necessary* to a faithful discharge of pastoral duties.

But, lightly as I esteem this claim, and little as I respect the minister who in extravagance squanders his resources, I think he is not at all beneath the society governed by men who are determined to give the impression that all ministers are mere idlers in the world — a race of Lazaruses lying at the gates of their hearers, who ought to be moved with the deepest gratitude for the privilege of feasting on the crumbs that fall from their tables; men that would at least prescribe the daily regimen of their pastors, saying *how much* they shall eat, *what* they shall drink, and *wherewithal* they shall be clothed; by men compassed about with their own abundance, who are ready to decide for themselves, and give tone to public sentiment on the enormity of guilt incurred by religious societies, in paying to pastors anything more than barely sufficient to save them and their families from absolute physical want from year to year; by men who, having accomplished their aims, and degraded the minister to a mere beneficiary, in the lowest sense of this term, are willing to prate about their piety, their zeal for the church, and their respect for the ministers of the Gospel; by men who, when the servants of Christ fall on the field of battle, a sacrifice to their own devotion and zeal, and leave their families to the mercy of God and the charities of those whom they have served,

are the first to wonder that, after all they have done for the deceased "while yet alive," they should now be visited with a demand for aid for his destitute widow and orphan.

Mr. Cook was not extravagant, nor yet was he a rigid economist. His income was little more than sufficient to support his family, and to meet those calls for charity which humanity and his profession alike called upon him to regard. What little he saved, he sacredly appropriated for a home, that might, in case of his removal, furnish a shelter for the objects of his deepest love.

That he sought to economize his expenditures, and bring them within the limits of his income, and that in this he had the cordial sympathy of his companion, and that together they found it exceedingly difficult to achieve this result, is evident from the following extract from her pen. They were both willing to labor with their hands to meet, if possible, current expenses, which at this time were very great; and therefore imposed upon themselves severe additional duties for the sake of realizing the scanty profits that might accrue to them from boarding three or four of the workmen in the printing-office. She says:

"I have not many pleasing associations to record of our first winter in Rochester, and I scarcely desire to live it over again, even in memory. Our family was much increased by boarding the workmen in the office of the Luminary; and yet, notwithstanding I had two small children, I performed alone the whole domestic work of my household. Nor was this all. Rochester is the great central point of Western New York. From many

miles around persons of all classes come occasionally to the city for purposes of pleasure or profit, and among these numerous visitors were many who had heard my husband preach, — had, perhaps, received calls from him at their own homes, and an invitation to reciprocate the courtesy should they ever come in the vicinity of his residence; and hence there was no lack of friendly callers, some to renew acquaintance, some to take a meal, some to tarry over night, and others to stay a few days. I well remember serving meals to fifteen different individuals in one day, besides our own family, and, horrible to relate, that a *washing day!* — the last after nine o'clock in the evening. We were generally pleased to see our friends, — none others of course called, — but should have enjoyed their society more had our facilities for accommodating them been such as to exempt us from that terrible physical exhaustion which waiting upon them occasionally induced."

Who can estimate the profits of such a boarding-house, where the aggregate sum paid for board is less than eight dollars per week, by four hearty men, and transient customers served *gratis?*

"Thus centrally located," continues the same writer, "there was a constantly increasing demand for the services of my husband in the region round about. Every subscriber to his paper seemed to reckon himself a sort of parishioner, and much more free to call upon him, for services at funerals, to visit the sick, etc., than before they enrolled themselves on the list of his patrons. And as he could never nerve himself to decline such calls, he labored more than was meet, and *suffered.*"

Mrs. Cook furnishes the following incident, which we give in the conclusion of this chapter, for the suggestions it contains — suggestions to would-be editors and proprietors.

"My husband wrote very little for the Luminary; yet the supervision of it cost him many anxious days, and many perplexing cares. I remember, one time, when the paper was just ready to be struck off, he left home to attend a conference, and was gone, as usual, some three or four days. He expected to find, on his return, that it had been issued and distributed to subscribers; but, on going to the office, he found little or no progress had been made in the work. On inquiring the cause of the delay, he found that it was owing to the want of a *pail*, in the office, which he had authorized the workmen to procure before leaving. And why had they not supplied themselves with this necessary article? Because, forsooth, it was thought a service beneath the *dignity* of their profession to carry it through the streets, and discourteous to the seller to ask him to send such a trifling article, and costing so little, to the office! Thus the paper was delayed beyond its date, to save the *reputation* of the *printers* at the expense of the reputation of the *publishers*, and greatly to his mortification. Sharing his indignation, I expressed my sincere regret to the boarders that they did not inform me of their embarrassment, and assured them that I would have relieved them of the menial service by performing it myself."

Cured of his ambition to become a publisher, he sold his interest in the paper, as related by Mr. Brown, and after having sacrificed several hundred dollars to gratify

the wishes of the "brethren generally," and *especially* those "liberal friends in that western territory, not one probably among twenty" of whom took a Universalist paper, he gladly retired from the field, and henceforth confined himself exclusively to his legitimate vocation — the preaching of the Gospel.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOMNAMBULISM.

VERY little importance may be attached to the fact, yet, as it may serve to give a more correct view of his character, and justify some of the allusions in the pages of this work, I remark that Mr. Cook was, during nearly the whole of his life, *a somnambulist.*

I am not aware that there was anything *peculiar* in his somnambulism, for I am not sufficiently acquainted with the developments of this state to determine, precisely, what is *common.*

In my childhood I used to hear most wonderful stories of a "sleeping preacher," who, according to the superstition of the times, was called of God to preach the Gospel in his youth, but had wickedly disobeyed the divine command. For this wanton disregard of an acknowledged duty, the great Judge of all the earth determined to *press* him into his service during those hours which he had allotted to repose from the service of Satan. Hence, having his own authority and, the good of sinners in view, he disposed him to exercises of mind and of utterance, which the world called preaching, every night, for weeks and months together, during several consecutive years; and thus made him at once an instru-

ment of his own glory, of the salvation of sinners, and of the defeat of the vile purposes of the devil. Whether this *explanation* of the phenomenon was perfectly satisfactory to the scientific men of those days, or not, is quite immaterial so far as this case concerns our present purposes; as it is, indeed, whether or not the "preacher" himself first suggested it, since this explanation is the one which both satisfied the multitude, and at the same time made them curious to hear this wonderful monument of the *judgment* and the *mercy* of Heaven.

This man — this sleeping preacher — was a very worthy neighbor, of unexceptionable character, retiring in his habits, and was never known to aspire to the distinction of a public speaker. Yet such are the facts concerning him:

On retiring to rest, at the usual hour, he gradually fell asleep. A little convulsive action of the muscles, a little rigidity about the limbs, and a slight pallor of countenance, were all that denoted anything extraordinary in his sleep. In this state he would go through the forms of devotion common in Protestant churches. He commenced by announcing the number of a hymn, waited a sufficient time for the hymn to be sung, then engaged in prayer, and, after another hymn, named his text, and proceeded to discourse from it.

During these exercises he seemed perfectly insensible to the outward world, to all applications designed to arouse him, to instruments of torture, which, for experiment to test the reality of his sleep, were more than once applied to his body. He was, indeed, in that pecu-

liar nervous condition which is so perfectly counterfeited by the manipulations of the mesmerizer.

I know not that Mr. Cook ever attained to this insensibility to outward impressions. It is certain that he yielded to mental influences, conversing on various topics, which *another* might suggest, with much freedom, *but never, whatever the force of solicitation applied, revealing his own secrets.* When he joined the fraternity of Odd-fellows, his wife, with the stamp of Eve upon her, thought she would gratify a little innocent curiosity by seizing upon the first opportunity after his initiation to ply him with persuasion, and through its potent influence, and the freedom of his somnambulic communications, learn the much-coveted *secret.* But the experiment was a failure, and the order suffered no scandal from the admission of the wary somnambulist to its secret communion. Other secrets, which he did not choose to disclose, were doubtless guarded with equal fidelity — were whispered only in the ears of him who knoweth all secrets, the prayer-hearing and sin-pardoning God.

I have heard many anecdotes relating to his somnambulism, but, with few exceptions, they are not of a character to amuse the gay or to edify the scholar. His effusions in this state were generally of a deeply religious character, breathing the highest strains of devotion, and often the sublimest conceptions of God and his government, of Jesus and his saving power, of heaven and its unspeakable glories. And, from this fact, as will be seen in a communication which follows, these themes were judged by some of his most intimate acquaintances to be the subjects of his profoundest thoughts. His

cheerfulness may have been the result of his meditation upon them, rather than of an excess of levity, to which it was sometimes ascribed.

On one occasion, while he resided in Rochester, after having occupied himself with thoughts of the resurrection of the dead during the day, and having retired at night still revolving the glorious subject in his mind, he arose, called up two young men who were at that time stopping with him, and informed them that God had commissioned *him* to raise the dead. There was a solemn earnestness in his manner and in his words, which startled them, and made them feel a peculiar awe of his presence. He pointed to the grave-yard, in the immediate vicinity of his residence, as the scene of his efforts, and, speaking as one having authority, he bade them follow him thither when he should lead the way. "Jesus," he causually remarked, "prayed when about to raise a single individual from the dead, and I cannot go forth to this solemn and untried service until I seek the strength of God in prayer." With these words, he engaged in prayer. And such a prayer! The young man who was present, and who afterwards related to me the circumstance, was familiar with his services in the desk and elsewhere; but never had he heard anything to compare with the strain of devotion which on this occasion fell from his lips. Sentence after sentence rolled forth, filling the trembling souls of the listeners with the divinest awe, until, at length, they began to believe that he was neither unworthy of, nor incompetent to, the mission with which he at the moment felt himself by the divine appointment so sacredly charged. And still he prayed.

Nearly three-quarters of an hour had passed away, and yet there was no want of force, of variety, or of unction, in his expression. At last, apparently exhausted with his efforts, he paused, awoke; all recollection of the theme on which he had dwelt vanished from his mind. He inquired of the young men what they were doing there, at that hour of the night, and advised them to retire without delay.

But I will not detain the reader with my own reflections on his somnambulism. When he was most subject to it, others, more familiar with his manner of life, and their testimony concerning him, may be more advantageously consulted than anything I might say. The following extracts are from a letter written by Rev. R. Tomlinson, of Plymouth, Mass., who watched with peculiar interest his growing usefulness in the service of Christ, from the time he entered the study of Mr. Sanderson, in Rochester, until he closed his labors in death, and will be duly prized by all who are acquainted with this faithful watchman on the walls of our Zion. I will add here, that, from encouragements like those expressed in Mr. Tomlinson's letter, received from many brethren most intimately acquainted with my brother, I have been stimulated to count as unworthy my natural reluctance to appearing before the world as an author, and to prepare these humble pages for the press, in moments snatched from the exhausting duties of a pastor's life.

But to the extracts.

"Bro. Cook: — I am glad that you are moved to the preparation of a Memoir of Br. James; and more especially as effort, have been made either to make a memory

of him a dishonor to his name and profession, or to blot it entirely from the mind.*

"But such a tribute is not necessary to defend his character where he was known, or to keep a memory of him in minds that understood the motives prompting him to devout action. It may serve to regulate the judgment and the feelings that have been created in minds more ignorant concerning him, and perform for them a work which, while it instructs, will at the same time administer a just reproof for decisions made upon a prejudiced testimony.

"I repeat it, therefore; I am glad that such a work is to be prepared, and by your hand. * * *

"I did not hear his sermon at Akron, being obliged to leave previous to the day on which it was delivered. I travelled with him, however, to the convention, and had an opportunity of knowing the peculiar exercises of his mind, and will say, *they were spiritual in the highest degree.*

"To me, there was a *certain* evidence of this, not only upon that occasion, but upon many others, when I have been with him. This evidence came through a channel which you may not recognize as particularly trustful; nevertheless, I think it entitled to respect, because it is derived from certain invariable laws governing the mind.

"You know he was habitually, if not naturally, a somnambulist; and the practical working of one of the

*This remark of Bro. Tomlinson was doubtless made under the influence of a most painful memory of the scene which transpired at the United States Convention, in Buffalo, Sept. 1850.

laws to which reference has been made, is to repeat, in that state, when uncontrolled by any external influence, what has most engaged the thoughts during the wakeful hours. If I am right in this speculation,—and I am confident that it is true to the developments of history, —then James was more than ordinarily spiritually minded. I have lodged with him often, and seldom has the night passed without some religious service,— an exhortation, or a prayer, or some form of praise. On my way to Akron, I lodged with him in Buffalo, and verily I thought the whole *spirit* of a religious convention was concentrated in our own upper chamber.

"At other times, I have listened to devout spiritual services, poured forth from his heart during the dark shadows of the night, when no particular outward exciting cause had been operating, carrying his mind towards heaven. Others have borne testimony to his devoutness of mind and purpose, with the greatest pleasure.

"If I am not mistaken, it was through the instrumentality of these services that the lady whom he afterwards married became a believer in the scripture doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. It was not uncommon for him, about the time that he commenced his labors in Chili, and while boarding at her father's, to attract to his presence, by the earnestness of his religious devotions, the whole household; and most happy was he, on many of these occasions, in his illustrations of divine truth. Verily, by day he sowed broadcast the seeds of the kingdom, and at night he withheld not his hand."

* * * * *

"I have not thus written, thinking it will aid you in

your task, more than a knowledge of my sympathy in your labors can do it. The tribute proposed is a just one, and will doubtless bless the souls of many besides his numerous personal friends, and serve to soften the asperities of the few who made themselves his enemies.

"God bless you, therefore, in this work of fraternal affection, and in all your ministry, and prepare you for an abundant entrance into his heavenly kingdom, in which dwelleth righteousness and peace.

"Fraternally yours,

"R. TOMLINSON.

"Rev. T. D. COOK."

The widow of Mr. Cook, knowing the intimate relations between him and the Rev. J. Whitney, of Rushford, solicited a communication at the hands of the latter, setting forth what he had witnessed of his somnambulism. He very kindly responded to this request in a letter addressed to the writer, and added what seems to be a very consistent analysis of Mr. Cook's religious character. He says:

"RUSHFORD, March 18, 1853.

"BRO. T. D. COOK:—As the widow of your lamented brother knew something of my acquaintance with the somnambulism of her husband, she has just requested me, by letter, to send you a statement of what I have witnessed, as a chapter for the memoir you are now preparing. It would certainly give me much pleasure to write out a somewhat extended relation of what I know in regard to his professional history; but my situation

and duties, at present, will only permit me to give you the following:

"I became intimately acquainted with your brother, J. M. Cook, soon after the commencement of his professional career, and with pleasure I remark, that a warm fraternal affection sprang up between us, which remained unbroken till the day of his departure from earth. He was an enthusiastic lover of the great doctrine he so ably inculcated, and this originated essentially his powerful method of utterance, and his claim to a distinguished rank among the clergymen of our order. He was eminently successful as a preacher and pastor, both at Chili and Churchville, where he commenced his labors, and at Fairport and Victor, where he labored up to the time of his settlement in Providence; and no man, I believe, has done more, in the same length of time, to advance the cause of Universalism in Western New York.

"I was twice favored with an opportunity of witnessing his somnambulic exercises, and will briefly state my convictions in relation to them.

"Bro. Cook's somnambulism was not superinduced by magnetism, but was perfectly natural. While in this state, he would discourse, for a few minutes at a time, with even more sublimity and power than he was capable of in his ordinary condition. He would think, reflect, reason and pray, with the complete use of his corporeal senses, and would even stop in the midst of his exercises to answer questions from persons who might be lodging in the same room, without any recollection in the morning of what had passed during his hours of sleep.

"The last opportunity I had of witnessing Bro. Cook's

somnambulism was the most interesting of the two. It was at a quarterly conference in Victor. We lodged at a public house, where we occupied two separate beds in an upper room, sufficiently retired to exclude us from the observation of all other lodgers. This mysterious mental condition of his occurred at about midnight, and, being awake myself at the time, I was there favored with just such a manifestation of the phenomena as I had long desired to witness. His exercises consisted chiefly of preaching and praying, being opened with a few bold, beautiful comments upon Moses' account of the first temptation, on which I had discoursed before the conference, in his presence, that evening. His spiritual nature seemed in a measure unfettered from the material form, though he retained perfectly the power of speech, by which he audibly arose above all sensuous conditions, into a pure, lofty sphere of harmonious conceptions and delight. I had often heard him preach in his ordinary state, but never knew him to exhibit such an exalted knowledge of man's interior nature, and such depth of faith in his future and eternal existence. I could not refrain from tears, as I beheld that which I felt and *knew* to be an incipient manifestation of the spiritual world.

"His somnambulism was interspersed with loud, rapid, incoherent mutterings, which seemed to subserve the purpose of extricating his spirit from its earthly thraldom; and I observed that these strange jargons invariably preceded his most independent and brilliant conceptions. In his whole deportment and expression, he was unlike what he uniformly appeared to be in his natural condition. His external senses being deadened in a measure,

the internal life became intensified, and his impressions were no longer benumbed and distracted by the intrusion of outward conditions. It was, to me, a remarkable demonstration of the soul's independence. He seemed to pass, at intervals, from his outer life to the eternal life of the spirit, and gave to my mind a striking proof that the powers which reside in man can stretch themselves beyond the narrow sphere of this rude existence, into the blissful regions of the spirit world.

"His eyes were probably open, although it was so dark in the room that I could not see them distinctly; for, when I interrupted his exercise by asking why he could not exhibit such extraordinary power when awake, he promptly replied that 'he *was* awake, and could see as well as I could.' I found him at any moment of this condition — which lasted about an hour — capable of sustaining a rational conversation, and of answering distinctly any question of a terrestrial nature.

"The whole scene was truly imposing and instructive. It drew my affections into its strong embrace, and I felt instinctively admonished by it that I was resting that night on holy ground. It excited the deepest feelings of my soul; threw a magnificence and spiritual beauty over the whole theme of man's inner life and future destiny, imparting a renewed conviction that spiritual sight is our highest vitality, and that it puts on an earthly tabernacle, as a work of necessity, to bring it into actual contact with external nature. It reflected spiritual light from a world of spiritual realities, investing the nature of man with a new significance, removing the clouds which conceal from his vision the joys and exaltation of

his heavenly home, and enabling him to exalt himself above the body of this death, to follow out the living principles and intuitions of his spiritual nature.

"In the morning I gave him a description of what had taken place during the night, but he had no recollection even of the familiar conversation that passed between us.

"Yours respectfully and sincerely,

"J. WHITNEY."

No one, from whom I have heard, that was acquainted with his mental exercises in this state, but pronounces them of a very high order, characterized not only by a devotional spirit, but also by extraordinary vigor of thought and force of expression. At such times he seemed to rise above himself, and to occupy a position which he seldom, if ever, reached in his ordinary efforts. Yet there were times, when, in his preaching, he approximated to this mental elevation, and poured forth strains of eloquence that seemed to electrify his hearers.

And I may add, that strikingly analogous to the manifestations of intellectual and spiritual power in his somnambulism were some of his mental moods in sickness. On one occasion he was taken ill in New York, where he found the kindest attentions in the amiable family of his friend, Rev. W. S. Balch. And during this sickness, he seemed constantly to occupy the higher realm of thought, familiar to his somnambulic state, and to evince a peculiar sensitiveness to the approach of different individuals who called to see him. Sometimes, while they were at a distance, and almost invariably

when they reached the outer door of the parsonage, he would announce to the inmates of his room (which was in the rear of the house) their names, and the object of their visit. And seldom did he make a mistake in regard to either. Whether this was the same power displayed by mesmerized persons in reading through box-covers and bandages, or not, I shall not attempt to decide, but, simply stating the fact, shall leave others to interpret it as they may. While it suggests the susceptibilities of the spirit, it foreshadows its glorious destiny.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MINISTRY IN PERRINTON.

PERRINTON is situated about ten miles east of Rochester, on the Erie canal. The village where Mr. Cook resided has been more familiarly known as Fairport, and, like most of the villages which furnish a market for the products of the rich lands of Monroe county, this one has a very neat and tidy appearance.

The Universalist church here is situated about thirty rods south from the canal, and a little east of the principal street. With its white tower or steeple pointing heavenward, lending a charm to the few adornments of the place, it commands a view of the quiet charms of the surrounding country, and is an object of interest alike to "the dwellers in the village" and to the passing beholder.

In this place,— in this humble church,— I think I am fully warranted in saying the subject of this memoir achieved some of the happiest results of his ministry.

On going to Fairport, in the autumn of 1841, he found the society much disheartened, and ready to give up in despair. Faithful and talented ministers had labored there, not in vain, and yet not with that success which shows itself in zeal among the people, delight in public

worship, and a living regard for personal holiness. Revs. S. Miles, one of the pioneers of our faith in that region, and W. E. Manley, were of the number of his immediate predecessors; and devoted servants of Christ they were. The former was called, not many years afterward, to the fruition of his hopes in the realms of immortality, and it is sufficient to say that he left a name precious to many devout hearts that had been benefited by his ministry. The latter still lives, and well deserves the reputation he has acquired,— the reputation of a good scholar, an able theologian, and a faithful and devoted advocate of the great salvation. But they had sought other fields of labor, and the society had been seriously affected by a growing apprehension on the part of the members that they possessed not the means to support a stated ministry of the word,— an apprehension most disastrous in its consequences upon the prosperity of any religious organization. Convince the invalid that what remains of his mortal career must be spent amidst the deepening shadows of death; that, do what he may, his "outer man will perish day by day," and you accomplish much to hasten his doom. Whereas, if you can inspire him with hopes of recovery, even while he is failing; can fully convince him that the future is full of promise; that every succeeding day will bring back a portion of that strength which the past has wasted, and you create new energies within him. You arrest the fatal tendencies of his disease, and thus multiply the chances for his recovery. In gloomy anticipations of death, we die before our time, or, at most, *live at a poor dying rate;* while, on the

other hand, the hope of life, wisely cherished, inspires life and all the conditions of its perpetuity.

What is true of individuals in this respect is equally true of religious societies. Convince any church or society that its future course lies through the valley and the shadow of death, that no hope of prosperity remains to it, that revolving years will but emblazon to the world its fearful sentence — *passing away*, — and you paralyze its energies, and *as* it believes so shall it be unto it. In doubting it "*is* damned." But quicken such a body with hope, fire it with the prospect of a glorious future, permeate it with a living faith, and immediately it will *arise and shine*, rejoicing in the conviction that its "light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon it." It passes speedily from the shades of death to the realms of life, and exults in the new-born hope that it can do all things through Christ, who never withholdeth strength from his people. And thus awakened and quickened, a society not only astonishes and gratifies its own members, but astonishes and gratifies a whole denomination.

Mr. Cook understood this. He did not, therefore, shrink from a society simply because, at the time it sought his labors, it might be passing through the ordeal of adversity. He knew if it could abide such a trial and subsequently aspire to the benefits of an efficient ministry, it contained within itself the living germ of greatness and glory, which would be quite likely to develop itself under his fostering care.

Hence, from the first, he regarded the society in Fairport as a favorable field for the exercise of his humble

powers, and, consequently, a most desirable charge. There is some satisfaction to a minister in knowing that a society cannot sink any lower either in its own, or the estimation of the public, than he finds it on accepting its pastorship; that if there is any change it must be for the better. Especially is this the case to one who has observed the caprice of prosperous societies, on the occasion of settling a *new* minister. However favorably his talents and reputation for piety may compare with those of his predecessor, he is almost sure to find himself tried and judged by the standard which the latter had erected and left in the hearts of his hearers. He is kept apprized of the measures which *have contributed* to the prosperity of the society, *have secured* public favor and popular regard, and reminded *occasionally* of the importance of honoring such worthy measures by an *humble* imitation of them. There was terrible severity in the remark of one who declared, that *he would never marry a widow unless positively assured that her first husband was hung, lest invidious comparisons should embitter the remainder of his life.* But if wives once widows are not more discreet in commending the example of their first love than are some religious societies in extolling the manner and measures, the style and subjects, of some popular pastor, to his successor just installed into office, it were well for men of sensibility and self-respect if they had been permitted to live widows, finding life's sweetest solace not in communion with the living, but in memory of the departed enshrined in their hearts.

Rev. W. W. Lovejoy discloses the condition of the

society in Perrinton, when he entered upon his pastoral duties there, in the following words:

"He commenced his labors in Fairport in the fall of 1841. For some time previous to his settlement the society had been in a languishing state, and the attendants at church few in number. The cause of the lukewarmness I have not been able to ascertain, but the fact was evident. The first Sabbath he preached to the Fairport people, his audience consisted of about twenty persons, and for a number of succeeding Sabbaths was small. But when he had been there not to exceed six months, their church, capable of seating some four or five hundred persons, was well filled. And from that time forth, while he remained, the congregation was always large, and the house was often so densely crowded that many were obliged to leave from the impossibility of gaining admittance.

"Attracted by the report of his eloquence, individuals would venture to hear him once to gratify curiosity, and having once listened, they found a ready inducement to listen again. Captivated by the earnestness of his manner, by his zeal, his subject-matter, his felicity of illustration, and the full, rich tones of his voice, they would not only come again themselves, but also bring their friends along, that they too might enjoy "the feast of reason and the flow of soul." In this way the circle of his influence was rapidly augmented. From all the neighboring towns, for miles around, people flocked to his meeting, and gave him an attentive, intelligent and appreciative hearing."

Such is the testimony of one familiar with his minis-

try in Fairport, and who was recently ordained to the work, from which death has summoned so many during a few years past. May he honor the pastoral instructions he received from the departed, and emulate his zeal and usefulness in the service of his Master.

Rev. M. B. Smith, a venerable servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has himself preached in Fairport, says :

"I have taken considerable pains to make inquiry in this region regarding his manner of life, and the prominent traits of his character as a man and as a preacher of the Gospel. I have not been able to obtain the knowledge of any remarkable incidents in his life which you would be likely to consider worthy of notice in a memoir, *unless I say, what in truth may be said, that his whole career as a preacher was remarkable.*"

This observation of Mr. Smith is worthy of a moment's thought. Many preachers pursue a course marked by no extraordinary events, and characterized by no remarkable ability. Analyze their sermons, and they evince no great depth of thought, very little order in their arrangement, and less literary taste in their finish. They have in them no intrinsic merit to commend them to the consideration of the student, or to the heart of the devout. They neither radiate light nor heat. As sermons, they rank no higher than mere common-place, and often below mediocrity. And yet, when they are delivered by their author, they fall upon the ears of an audience, not deficient in mental or religious culture, with astonishing effect. Under their influence the drowsy soul is penetrated with new zeal, the guilty are moved to penitence,

and the scoffing lip lisps its first accents of earnest and devout prayer. The thoughtful are edified, and admiration is kindled in the minds of those who, from their literary habits, are capable of appreciating the beauty and the power of eloquence.

The secret of the influence of such men is fully developed in the adage of one not unknown to fame as a "revivalist," and which runs as follows: "MANNER IS MATTER." There is *matter* in the spirit which the speaker evinces while engaged upon the sublimest themes of the pulpit — duty, destiny, Deity, — matter which, diverting attention from the imperfections of a merely mechanical eloquence, electrifies the hearer, quickens his devotions, and, as an active instrumentality of the Holy Ghost, brings to mind the words of Jesus. There is "matter" in the tones of his voice, in the kindling of his eye, and in the expression of his whole countenance. If these reveal the soul, if they proclaim its baptism into the *name* of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, if they express its devotion to the ministry of the word, every sentence carries with it to the heart of the hearer a divine unction; every thought suggests another and a better thought; every sentiment intensifies the longing of the soul for communion with God, and stimulates to prayer. Whereas, if the voice, the eye, the whole countenance, are only trained to serve the purposes of a sordid ambition; to acquire fame rather than to do good; to glorify self rather than to preach Jesus; to disparage the cross in order more effectually to magnify the "wisdom of the world;" and to display the power of human eloquence, regardless of the longings of the soul for the bread of life;

then there is matter in the manner; matter, however, from which the servant of Christ may well shrink and refuse to bear before his people.

Still there may be nothing remarkable in the labors of the successful and worthy preacher whom we have described; nothing to excite particular attention in any *one* effort; no "remarkable incidents" worthy of being recorded in a memoir; nothing, indeed, unless, "what in truth may be said of his whole career as a preacher, *it was remarkable.*"

Mr. Smith continues: "No preacher in our denomination has ever been more popular with the masses, in Western New York, than was J. M. Cook." This is, indeed, high praise, coming from a man of extensive observation, of intimate acquaintance with the history of the denomination, and himself no enthusiast. "In Churchville, where he commenced, the society was considerably augmented in numbers, was prosperous and active, and erected a commodious house of worship during his stay there." We have already noted his success in this place, as well as in Chili. "In Fairport," he writes, "his success was wonderful; his preaching seemed to attract the attention of all, and draw into his congregation the whole community, except those who were members of other churches, *and many of them did not keep away entirely.* Very many of the 'world's people' were regular attendants on his ministry, who were not before in the habit of attending religious meetings of any kind. A few of these, I believe, were truly converted, and remained members of the society after he left; while others, released from the attractive force of his labors,

returned to their former habits, and are now seldom seen in the house of God."

We have thus indicated, in a general outline, the change wrought in the condition of the Fairport society, through the instrumentality of his labors. We see it now, low in "the slough of despond," with a congregation numbering only about twenty souls, gathered to listen to his first discourses. Anon, gloom gives place to glory, and the congregation is numbered by hundreds. What is the secret of this glorious resurrection to life? How was it wrought?

CHAPTER XIX.

LABORS IN PERRINTON.

It would certainly be very gratifying to my feelings if I could fully and definitely answer the questions recorded in the conclusion of the preceding chapter; if I could exhibit, in a just light, the character of Mr. Cook's *labors in Perrinton*, and explain accurately the conditions of that success which crowned those labors, and which I have already indicated. Gladly would I penetrate the realm where he so often walked alone with his God, and to which his spirit turned for the strength he displayed in those days — the realm sanctified by secret prayer and by devout communion with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I would read and report his conflicts with temptation, with worldliness, with sordid ambition, with the love of fame, and with the dangerous pride inspired by success. I would tell how, struggling with all these influences, he was enabled, through prayer and reliance upon the grace of God, to rise gradually in the work of his high calling; how, despite these influences, he was enabled to nestle more closely in the bosom of the loving Jesus, and to feel the beatings of his heart as new and quick recurring impulses to toil and labor for the salvation of the world.

That he was accustomed to employ all these means of grace; that he depended upon them for success more than all things else; and that, through these, he obtained that power, that spiritual energy, which was evinced in his ministry, is a fact quite familiar to his more intimate friends. But the "times and seasons" which he thus employed in refreshing his spirit, and invigorating it for the great battle of life — these are known only to God. He alone can tell how great the struggles which such triumphs cost. Occasionally, when the outer senses were veiled in sleep, and the spirit was left free to luxuriate in its accustomed delights, he poured forth its deeper aspirations in audible sounds — in words that never failed to thrill the heart of the hearer, and to convince him that the unconscious suppliant was no stranger to secret devotion.

But, though we may not now invade this realm so often sought by his spirit while tabernacled in the flesh; though we may not break in upon his privacy with the Father, and report (even for purposes of instruction to the young heralds of the great salvation) the exercises of devotion to which he accustomed himself, and which secured to this portion of his life such triumph over the world; yet we may point to the fruits of his ministry, as an evidence of the utility, and the absolute necessity, of such exercises, and bid the young man, aspiring to the sacred office, beware, lest a desire for fame or distinction should cause him to forget or, lightly esteem them, and lead him to seek eminence chiefly in literary pursuits — in the graceless arts of rhetoric — in the wisdom of words — "*great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration, because of advantage.*" No

minister can reasonably hope to succeed, who, in this way, excludes God from his thoughts, and crucifies to himself the Son of God afresh. No man that wantonly repudiates habitual seasons of communion with the Father, and relies upon his literary qualifications, the grace of his person, or his affectation of devotional spirit, to give him rank in the kingdom of heaven, but must fail,—ought to fail.

Though there was an acknowledged charm about his manner of preaching, and a degree of fascination in his personal intercourse with his charge, which served to some extent to multiply the number of his hearers, and thus to crown his efforts with the outward indications of a successful ministry, yet he knew but too well that it would be perfectly futile to rely upon these influences for permanent prosperity. He knew that religious societies, once familiar with them, soon become weary of them, and, in the absence of anything better, become listless and indifferent. He therefore addressed himself with great energy to the work of preparing the minds of his charge in Fairport for the introduction among them of those means of grace which God has ordained, and which the experience of Christians has so fully approved.

In his former fields of labor, as we have seen, he had sought to bring his hearers to a just appreciation of church organization, as a means of spiritual improvement. But, for reasons which have already been hinted, he never accomplished this desire of his heart. The touching and suggestive ordinance of the Lord's supper was never administered to his people in Churchville or in Chili. Though frequently alluded to in his discourses,

as a means of grace too little regarded now, because the past has too often witnessed its abuse, he was compelled to deplore the indifference and the prejudice which doomed this appointment of Jesus to neglect; and, deprived of its influence, to labor more arduously for the promotion of truth and righteousness. But, with a larger experience, and with a more intimate acquaintance with the peculiar adaptation of this heaven-appointed ordinance to the religious wants of man, he could not consent to tolerate those groundless prejudices which had too long kept it from the society in Fairport; and therefore made it one of the first objects of his ministry, on going there, to organize a church, and to establish its stated observance. This result he accomplished under God; and it proved to be all that he had anticipated as a means of spiritual growth to his people.

"As the result of his efforts," says Mr. Lovejoy, "a church organization was effected the ensuing summer (1842), and twenty-two persons subscribed their names to the articles of agreement, and became members of the church. This number was subsequently increased until it amounted to upwards of eighty." His widow puts the number of members that united with this church during his ministry at "over *one hundred*." But either statement exhibits an example of prosperity which the history of our larger societies have seldom furnished. Indeed, very few churches of our denomination number one hundred members. But, without instituting any comparisons which might seem to be invidious, I may be allowed to say that this achievement was wrought against many obstacles. Very few societies in Western New York had

at that time made any progress in the organization of churches as distinct bodies. Probably not half a dozen societies west of Utica, were blest with the stated administration of the holy supper. A few ministers of the order had taken ground upon this subject, and had wisely endeavored to engage the people in carrying out their views. The organization of churches and a stated observance of the communion had been recommended by some of our associations; but these recommendations, like many others, which appear well in print, and read well among the "proceedings" of Christian bodies, fell upon *dull ears*, and were almost entirely disregarded. If not a systematic opposition to these innovations upon the established customs of the denomination, among the great body of believers, there was, at least, an immovable apathy, a stolid indifference, which effectually resisted the appeals of public bodies, and seemingly rendered hopelessly vain the efforts of individual ministers. The fear of being too much like the orthodox *in this respect* was not allayed by the conscientious scruples of the Magazine and Advocate, in regard to the communion, nor soothed by many of the more influential preachers, the conservatives in our public bodies, who sympathized with the oft-repeated views of its principal editor.

To overcome the obstacles which this condition of things interposed in the way of success; to create a sympathy in his purposes, which, taking the place of former indifference and pampered prejudices, should justify an attempt to organize a church; and to carry forward the enterprise until nearly one hundred names are enrolled

on the list of its members, was a work of which any Christian pastor could well afford to be proud.

After the organization of this church, and the one at Victor, he wrote me in the following significant terms:

"Getting along finely in society affairs. Glorious revival in my churches at Victor and Fairport. Added to the latter a few weeks since twenty-two members, who all received the ordinance of baptism. The adversaries of our faith are astonished — not more than some of its friends! The whole community is stirred by this demonstration in behalf of Universalism, and some are already inquiring 'what shall the end be?'

"Well, T. D., we must come to this! I go for revivals. I preach not only faith, but repentance and baptism — in short, a divine life, with all the conditions of its attainment."

Another time he received into the church, by immersion, seventeen members, of various ages, and some of the vast multitude that assembled to witness the administration of this rite, touched by the solemnity of the scene, expressed their fears that the whole community would very soon be converted to Universalism.

"In the spiritual welfare of this little body of believers," writes Mr. Lovejoy, "Bro. Cook manifested a deep and an abiding interest. This was shown in various ways: by a constant endeavor to establish a unity of spirit among the members; by his touching comments and feeling allusions at the period of communion; by the daily relations he sustained towards those composing it; and, finally, by his petitions for its prosperity on the

day he delivered his farewell discourse before leaving for a distant field of labor."

This was not all. He saw clearly that every religious society, that would enjoy permanent prosperity, must care for the religious interests of the young — the lambs of the fold. Hence,

"During his stay in Fairport" — I quote again from Mr. Lovejoy, "a Sabbath school and Bible class were formed, and much interest was taken in both. I well remember the pleasure which his presence and remarks in the Sabbath school gave the children. The sudden lighting up of countenances on his approach, and the beaming, sparkling expression of the eyes, clearly revealed the happiness within. Children loved him. The power of winning the affection of young hearts was one of his marked peculiarities. Among the more advanced class of youth, it was recognized in the frequent calls he had to celebrate marriages. No other clergyman in the place was so often selected for these occasions as Bro. Cook. The inference is clear that he had, by some means, succeeded in touching the golden chord of sympathy within their hearts, and these were some of its fruits."

The power of which Mr. Lovejoy speaks, the power to win the affections of childhood, must be regarded as an endowment rather than as an acquisition. It consists in the native affections of the heart for little children — a deep sentiment of the soul which responds to the declaration of the Master, "of such is the kingdom of God." I do not say that philosophy and religion never develop this sentiment in the heart where its elements, never entirely wanting, are scarcely recognized by their possessor. In

deed, I am happy in the belief that few of our kind ever sink so low as to *feel* none of those impulses whose legitimate expression is a benediction upon little children. But for one, deficient in the sentiment and the impulses we have named, to indulge in reproaches of children, and then seek to find in their indifference to him a justification of these reproaches, and of the superadded charge of "*total depravity*," is one of the lamentable extremes of human folly. Every man, every child should know that

"Love, and love only, is the loan for love."

And if the pastor feels not his own heart drawn out in love for the lambs of his fold, he has no right to claim the confidence and affections so highly prized by him who, in the secret depths of his being, cries out, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not." He will give himself to the cultivation of this sentiment, the love of children, and find in the virtues which it inspires his highest reward. To *affect* it will not do. The little child reads, as by intuition, the heart; and affectation is but a thin veil which only gives a darker aspect to what it is designed to conceal. Mr. Cook was a sincere lover of children, and this sufficiently accounts for the delight which his presence in the Sabbath school and in the family circle so readily awakened.

Whatever may have been his real merits as a controversialist, as a public debater, one can scarcely fail to notice a striking uniformity in the testimony of all who have spoken of his early ministry on this subject; how, with one accord, they ascribe to him extraordinary "gifts and graces," as an apt defender of the truth.

That he had a fondness for controversy with the believers in the doctrine of endless misery, will not be denied by any one at all familiar with his character. That he was successful, *in the eyes of his friends*, in the vindication of his own sentiments, is no less certain; but his success in this respect can scarcely be regarded as a proof of the possession of extraordinary powers. He possessed certain qualifications of a debater, which made him a formidable opponent, especially when the respective merits of his own and of the popular creed were under consideration. He understood orthodoxy in all its various phases. He was familiar with its defences. He could readily and accurately repeat every text of Scripture ordinarily quoted for its support. He had satisfied himself of the meaning of these texts. He was fully convinced that they could be rationally and scripturally interpreted so as not to involve in their suggestions the awful doctrine of remediless woe. He knew, too, enough of the human heart to feel assured that all its holier instincts repelled this doctrine, and rejoiced in the assurance that "the living God is the Saviour of all men."

In regard to his reasoning powers, it will be sufficient to say that they were not those of a profound logician. He could much more readily detect the imperfection of an argument proposed by an opponent, than advance one himself not quite obnoxious to criticism. His power of inference was far superior to his power of statement. He marked with great severity, and exhibited with skill, any discrepancy between the premises and conclusions of another, and was more successful in this than in attempts to state his own propositions in clear and forcible lan-

guage, and to sustain them by proofs seen at once to be direct and conclusive. When he attempted verbal criticism, he always periled his reputation as a scholar, and laid himself open to the severest rebukes. But he knew his weakness in these particulars, as he knew his strength in others, and therefore depended for success in debate on exhibiting the errors of his opponent, exposing the enormity of the theory he attempted to defend, and on his own confident appeals to the heart for the sanction of the truth he cherished; a truth which lighted up his features in debate, imparted a thrilling melody to his voice, and found its response in the intuitions of his hearers. And sometimes we are tempted to think that the great central idea of his theory is too expansive to be uttered in the restrictive syllogisms of the logician, and must be expressed, if at all, and with the greatest effect, in the spontaneous effusions of the soul, baptized into its spirit, and overflowing with the joy which it inspires.

A correspondent writes me from Fairport:

"In the winter of 1843–44, if I remember correctly, a debating legislature or society was established in the place, for the purpose of mutual improvement to all concerned. In this association Bro. Cook was one of the most prominent speakers. During the winter several important questions were discussed, and the mental contest was at times exceedingly spirited. When present he was always in the van of the conflict. Opposed to him in each discussion was a young man of fine talents (now deceased), who, accustomed to the frequent use of his controversial powers, had ever before borne off the

palm of victory. Each question was decided on the merits of the discussion, by a vote of the house; and at every vote Bro. Cook was pronounced victor. His success in these discussions, it is thought, assisted him materially in extending the circle of his influence; the interest felt in his labors as a disputant overthrew sectarian prejudice, and induced gradually a deep interest in his labors as a Christian minister. He doubtless foresaw this as the legitimate result of such efforts, and engaged in them more for the enlightenment of the public mind on religious subjects, than on the subjects properly embraced in the questions discussed."

During the same winter, great excitements prevailed in some of the partialist churches in Fairport, which, for the want of an appropriate name that did not betray the motives of those engaged in them, were usually called "revivals of religion." I have had occasion to speak of these *abominations* in the preceding pages, and it will be deemed sufficient to say that those of Fairport were very like others which declining churches resorted to for the purpose of quickening the zeal of the lukewarm, winning back the alienated, restoring backsliders, and replenishing the waning lists of *members* from the ranks of children, of "silly women," and *more silly men.* As usual, the Universalists came in for their full share of abuse. The "wire pullers," knowing the influence which Mr. Cook had acquired in the place, the respect accorded to him by the young, and the generous tone of sentiment that characterized the utterances of all classes in speaking of him, very wisely concluded that little could be accomplished for the resuscitation of their churches,

and for staying the progress of Universalism, while he retained the hold he then had upon the kind regards of the people. Classing him, therefore, with other preachers of the great salvation, they very charitably denounced the whole fraternity as emissaries of the devil, and called upon their hearers to shun *him* as they would the very father of lies. They were "*exceedingly mad against*" him, and verily thought they ought to do many things to rid the earth of such a monster. They therefore, having, as it would seem, received an extra effusion of the spirit of their benign and heavenly religion, having been baptized anew into all the charities of their faith, prayed with a fervor that must have moved the pity, if not the wrath of Heaven, that the voice of this "arch-deceiver might be stopped, and his breath taken from his nostrils!" We are not to doubt the efficacy of the prayers of "*the righteous*," though these prayers did not prevail. Nor are we to question the claims of the petitioners to this character, since to deny them might seem to imply a worldly want of confidence in their pretensions. But conceding their claims, and yielding a devout assent to the apostolic declaration that the prayers of the righteous avail much, we can only acount for their disappointment in a work so obviously in accordance with the will of *their* God, by taking shelter under the suggestions of the prophet, and supposing that he whom they addressed was *either talking, or pursuing, or on a journey, or, peradventure*, indulging himself in a sort of Rip Van Winkle sleep, from which he did not choose to be awakened in those days, lest he should behold the weakness or wickedness of his worshippers! Whatever

the cause of their failure, this prayer, so permeated with the spirit of him who came "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them," was not efficacious,—there was indeed "no voice, nor any that answered." It was repeated with an agony of spirit, but, alas! there was still "no voice nor any to answer, nor any that regarded." And, to convince them that they had prayed in vain, he went into "*their solemn meetings*," and sought opportunities to "speak on God's behalf."

On one occasion he found the principal performer, the Rev. Mr. Kingsly, engaged in an effort to show the inconsistencies of Universalism. He had previously pledged himself to do this, and assured his audience that for this purpose he "should read from one of their *own* books." Many were attracted by this notice, and the house was full. After naming his text and indicating the object of his discourse, he commenced reading from a work entitled "UNIVERSALISM AS IT IS," the authorship of which, by implication, he most unblushingly ascribed to Universalists, and also hinted that it contained an epitome of their doctrines. Alas for the orthodoxy of that system of faith which recognizes the necessity of such defences, and the endorsement of the author of "Universalism not of God," for its support!

No sooner had Mr. Kingsly said amen, than the familiar voice of Mr. Cook, in a very earnest tone, was heard in the following questions:

Mr. C. "Permit me to ask, sir, if the book from which you have just read was published by Universalists?"

Mr. K. (with evident confusion). "It was not."

Mr. C. "Is its author *at present* a Universalist?"

Mr. K. "He *is* not."

Mr. C. "*Was he ever a Universalist?*"

Mr. K. (hesitated, the whole audience, meanwhile, intensely excited, and seeming to demand a prompt answer, finally whimpers out — "I *believe not!*"

"This last question," says an eye-witness, "was the touch of Ithuriel's spear. The arch-fiend stood revealed, and the naked boldness of this attempt to impose upon the people had its legitimate effect on the public mind." The traducer was rebuked, and soon after left the place; while Mr. Cook had added another trophy to those already won in the cause of his Master.

"At another time," says the writer quoted above, "Mr. Cook, asking liberty to speak, was warmly opposed by a few present, but finally obtained permission. Taking for his motto the words of Jesus, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have *love* one for another,' he dwelt a few moments on the theme of love, and so powerful was his pleading that the most bigoted afterwards confessed that their prejudices were softened, and many were heard to say that they regretted he did not continue longer."

It was during this excitement that the Rev. David Bernard, of Penfield, a town contiguous to Fairport, was reported to have said that he would like to discuss the merits of Universalism with Mr. Cook. This report coming to the ears of the latter, called forth from him the following note:

"REV. DAVID BERNARD:

"DEAR SIR:—I understand that you have expressed a desire to meet me in a public discussion, for the purpose of considering the important question of man's final destiny. This question involves interests dear to every soul.

"I understand, also, that you expressed this desire publicly, on the evening you closed your protracted effort in this place. You propose that each of us shall write a discourse expressive of our respective views on the final destiny of man, and then that we meet and deliver them before the same audience.

"The proposal to meet you in public debate I hereby accept. But the *manner* you propose debating the subject appears to me a novel one, involving a wide departure from the ordinary methods of theological discussions. Our object and only aim should be to do good by eliciting truth. To accomplish this, our labors should be so directed as to place both sides of the question fairly before the minds of our hearers. Hence I would propose that, instead of writing and reading sermons upon this great question, *we meet* at some appointed time and place,—that we have a board of moderators, whose duty it shall be to keep the parties to the question and preserve order in the congregation, and that we speak alternately, twenty-five or thirty minutes each, to the following questions:

"1. Do the Scriptures teach the endless punishment of any portion of mankind? Or,

"2. Do they teach the final salvation of all mankind?

"If this proposal should meet your approbation, please

write and let me know when it would be most convenient for you to commence the discussion.

"I would suggest that, if my proposal is accepted, we meet in your church in Penfield, for the reason that it is much larger, and would, therefore, accommodate many more hearers than mine in this place.

"An early answer to this will much oblige

"Your brother in the hope of the Gospel of Christ,

"JAMES M. COOK."

In a postscript, he suggests that the first question shall be discussed until the affirmative has either exhausted its resources of defence, or is willing to submit the question, with the proof which shall have been adduced, to the people, and then proceed to the second, with no other restriction as to the time to be devoted to its discussion than simply the pleasure of the disputants.

This letter called forth a reply, which is understood to have contained an acceptance of Mr. Cook's proposition, with certain ingenious reservations; and hence the latter felt justified, notwithstanding these reservations, in saying to his friends that he "*expected a public discussion with Mr. Bernard.*" Immediately rumors of the anticipated event were rife in the community, and much interest was evinced by all classes to know the result of the approaching contest.

Other letters were exchanged by the parties, and very soon it was evident that Mr. Bernard was willing to hang on his *reservations*, and thus avoid any actual collision with Mr. Cook. But he had gone too far to do this with credit to himself; and when his hesitation in the matter

was disclosed, and his cowardice became manifest, many, who had hitherto taken no special interest in the cause of religion, aroused to indignation by his unmanly retreat from the field ere actual hostilities had commenced, called for a publication of the whole correspondence, in order that the community, who had borne with his extravagant *revivalism*, and had accorded to him the credit due to a valorous champion of his creed, might, basing their judgment on facts, visit him with that rebuke which his valedictory boasting of a desire to meet Mr. Cook and his subsequent cowardice so richly deserved. Obedient to this call, Mr. Cook gave notice of his intention to read from his desk on the following Sabbath the entire correspondence had with Mr. Bernard, and called upon the public to hear and judge for themselves. At the appointed time, the house was crowded to excess by an audience gathered from all the region round about, not a few of whom belonged to Mr. Bernard's stated congregation in Penfield. The correspondence was read; and from that time forward the great revivalist and champion of orthodoxy gradually declined in his theological proportions, until, a few weeks later, measured by the standard of his former friends in Fairport, he exhibited only the diminutive stature of a little, noisy braggart.

The result of this effort was favorable to the reputation of Mr. Cook, and tended to promote the success of his ministry.

One circumstance, which, at the time, was thought to determine, to a very great extent, the final action of Mr. Bernard in reference to the proposed debate, I have

omitted to mention. It is thus related by the widow of Mr. Cook:

"During the continuance of the correspondence with Mr. Bernard, my husband was called to preach a funeral discourse in Fairport. Our church was filled to its utmost capacity, the stairs leading to the desk, the aisles, every part, occupied. After the commencement of the service, Elder Bernard, with a friend, came in: the former took his stand in the aisle at the right of the desk, and stood with his keen eye riveted upon the speaker during the delivery of the discourse; and the latter sought a seat farther back from the pulpit, for the purpose of taking notes of what might be said. On seeing the elder, the spirit of the young preacher was stirred with a new zeal, which changed the whole aspect of his countenance; and if ever he was *more* than eloquent, it was then. The proofs of Universalism were poured forth — piled upon each other — until, at length, to the mind of the speaker, there was left no room for doubt, when one of those self-evident *inferences*, in which his preaching abounded, burst forth from his overflowing soul, accompanied by an appeal to the heart which thrilled every hearer. Foreseeing the effect of this appeal, and without waiting the result, he instantly turned to the friend taking notes, fixed his eye upon him, and exclaimed, "Now mark *that;* put *that* down!" and then proceeded with his discourse. The reporter, in doubt as to whether he was called upon to note the *inference*, or the *effect* thereof on the audience, which at that moment was so apparent, attempted neither, and

remained motionless, his countenance only recording the intense emotions of his soul.

"Elder Bernard afterwards declared that he had heard those who were considered great men,— great in the senate, at the bar, and in the pulpit,— but had never heard anything before that exceeded some passages in this discourse, in point of *effective* eloquence."

The merits of this compliment we must leave the reader to decide, in view of the facts already stated in regard to its author, and can only add here, that, in whatever light Mr. B. looked upon this effort, it is notorious that after having witnessed it he evinced no desire to meet Mr. Cook in a public controversy.

One other influence which Mr. Cook brought to bear upon the interests of this society we must mention, in accounting for the change wrought in its affairs during his pastoral connection with it.

I know we are wont to regard *improvements* in temples of worship as the fruits of prosperity rather than as a means of its attainment. Religious societies, for this reason, are content to remain from year to year the occupants of a sanctuary that does as little credit to their religious sensibilities as to their taste and to their regard for personal comfort. In the homes of the members, often, there must be an air of neatness. There must be the adornments of art for the eye, music for the ear, and many things to promote the ease of those who dwell therein. At the same time, they are willing to go into the house of the Lord, tread its naked aisles, sit on its uncushioned seats, gaze upon its smoky walls, listen to the discords of uncultivated voices, and call them

"*sacred music*," and then, to justify their indifference to these things, urge the plea that God delights in simplicity of worship, is better pleased with devotions offered in *such* a house than in one exhibiting an air of neatness, where refined taste is displayed in its arrangements, and where the hymns of Zion are sung, not only with the *spirit*, but with the *understanding* also. These certainly might profit by the pious meditations of the Psalmist, as he surveyed the splendor of his own palace in contrast with the place where God was worshipped, and said to Nathan, "Lo, I dwell in a house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord remaineth under the curtains. Then Nathan said unto David, Do all that is in thy heart, for God is with thee."

It was one of Mr. Cook's peculiar weaknesses to loathe that affectation of piety which cants about *simplicity of worship*, with no higher object than to save a trifling sum demanded occasionally for improvement. He had no faith in the pretence that God is better pleased with worship offered in a temple destitute of "form and comeliness" than in one where everything strikes the outward senses as being in beautiful harmony with the spirit developed by the Gospel of Christ. He believed that a society was bound by high considerations "to beautify the place of HIS sanctuary." The lesson of the king whose conduct "was right in the sight of the Lord," he urged upon all to whom he ministered, saying, "*Go out * * and gather of* ALL ISRAEL *money to repair the house of the Lord from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter.*"

In other words, the subject of this memoir sincerely

believed that the sanctuary where men gather for worship should, of itself, possess attractions for the young heart, and rather appeal to the love of the beautiful which dwells in all devout souls, than present a scene of confusion and disorder most repulsive to the cultivated mind. He insisted upon these things as a condition of success to the efforts of any society.

In Fairport the house of worship showed evident signs of neglect. The lot on which it stood was thrown open to the public, and, at his suggestion, it was neatly enclosed and ornamented; thus lending a new charm to the whole exterior of the building. Many persons, residing at a distance from the church, were unwilling to attend, because no place had been provided for the accommodation of their teams. This evil was remedied by the erection of new sheds on the rear of the lot. The internal arrangements of the church were far from being interesting. The aisles were not carpeted, the wood-work needed painting, and the walls whitening. The ladies belonging to the society were encouraged to organize a sewing circle, and to direct their efforts to the accomplishment of these desirable improvements. They entered into the spirit and purposes of their pastor with alacrity and zeal, and in a few months the work was done; and as they contemplated their achievement, and contrasted the present with the past, they realized, more than ever, the beauty and significance of the words of the Psalmist, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!"

These improvements awakened a new interest in the society, not only on the part of those who wrought them, but served also to stimulate the male members of the so-

ciety to new zeal and activity. Watching the progress made in them till the favorable moment arrived, the pastor proposed that a new organ should forthwith be placed in the gallery, to take the place of the stringed instruments that had previously discoursed music there, to the no great delight of pastor or people; and appealed to the pride and magnanimity of his brethren to emulate the spirit of the ladies in this work of improvement, and to contribute the amount necessary to procure one. The appeal was successful; and thus, in a very short time, his people had succeeded in beautifying the sanctuary of the Lord, and making it a desirable resort on the Sabbath. They now felt that lively interest in the place, and in the services thereof, which brought them out in great numbers, when it was open for public worship; and the zeal born of these never waned while he continued his pastoral connection with them.

It is clear to my mind that nothing is so favorable to the interests of a religious society as a disposition on the part of its members *to work*, and favorable opportunities for something to do. *Inactivity* and *legacies* are among the most efficient agencies employed by the devil to ruin individuals and churches. No society will long mourn the want of zeal — a zeal for God which is according to knowledge — that can be engaged in work (requiring time, an outlay of money and self-sacrifice) for the cause. If dissensions arise, and parties rally under opposing standards, the most successful method of allaying the bitterness engendered by hostilities, is, if possible, to engage all in some common cause — in repairing the breaches in the walls about Zion — in build-

ing up its waste places — *is, if possible, to induce among the people "a mind to work."*

It must be recollected that nearly all the achievements in Fairport, indicated in the foregoing pages, were the result of Mr. Cook's public labors. As yet he resided in Rochester — was, for most of the time, engaged in the publication of the Luminary, and was permitted only occasional opportunities of mingling with this people, except on the Sabbath. He had little time to devote to pastoral visits, and they were seldom made.

In the summer of 1843, his wife, worn down with the cares and toil of her household, was attacked with a typhus fever, which very seriously threatened her life. This sickness imposed additional cares and responsibilities upon the husband. He felt that it might possibly have been induced by her efforts to economize the expenses of the family — by too great personal exertions to save his credit — and therefore that he was, to a certain extent, implicated in the cause of her suffering. It was the first serious sickness she had had since their marriage, and it revealed to her new depths of his affection. She says: "If I could command language to speak of his peculiar tenderness and kindness of manner in the sick room, I might dwell upon them here as an example to others. But words would fail to express the emotions of my heart, and I will only add, if he was dear to me as a husband before, he was doubly dear after this trial disclosed to me, in a new light, the deeper sympathies of his nature. In September, after nearly two months' suffering, I had so far recovered as to be able to ride for the first time to Chili, where I purposed to remain, at my father's, while

he was absent to attend the meeting of the United States Convention of Universalists held that year in Akron, Ohio. His long confinement in the sick room made me anxious that he should go; but in his absence I experienced a relapse; and to his subsequent kindness and watchful care, under God, I feel now that I owe my life. The physician, a man of ripe experience, as I began to recover a second time, congratulating me on the kind attentions of my husband, said, 'He is half doctor by nature, and I never knew but one better nurse than he.'"

Notwithstanding the multiplicity of his other engagements during the summer of 1843, Mr. Cook united with a class for the purpose of obtaining instruction in elocution. He also commenced with much earnestness the study of the Latin and Greek languages. But his professional duties so often called him from the city, that he could not observe punctuality in his attendance upon the recitations of the class, and with great reluctance he abandoned these "studies for the present, but" (in the words of his widow) "with many hopes that the day would come when he could suspend his ministerial functions a sufficient time to resume and prosecute them to the extent of his desires. None thirsted for knowledge, or felt the want of a thorough education, more than did he. He often said it was not too late yet to pursue an academical course, and, at times, seemed to persuade himself that in God's providence an opportunity would be afforded him to gratify this growing desire of his heart. But, alas! this opportunity was never granted him! Toil! *toil!* TOIL! — This was the portion of his life, and, sometimes my heart tells me, the cause of a premature death."

Reference has been made to his visit to Akron, to attend the session of the General Convention there in September, 1843. This probably was the largest meeting of Universalists ever held in the western states. About seventy preachers, and among them some of the most distinguished of the denomination, were present.

On this occasion he was invited to preach before the convention. Whatever may have been the real merits of his discourse, it excited no small amount of interest among his hearers, and called forth many flattering notices from various brethren in the ministry. His text was, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years," Hab. 3 : 2; and, so far as I have been able to ascertain, the effort was very properly characterized "a revival sermon." It was designed to arouse the denomination to a deeper interest in the subject of vital piety — to a just regard for growth in grace as well as in a *knowledge* of our Lord Jesus Christ. The speaker was deeply impressed with the conviction, that the time had come for the denomination to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ and go on unto perfection. And his appeals in behalf of a higher spiritual culture, and that devotional spirit which such culture induces, were most effective. Several intelligent brethren, with whom I conversed, declared this to be *the* discourse of the occasion. One, especially, said, "Regarded as a sample of sermonizing, it had perhaps less in its structure and finish to recommend it than several others preached during the meetings of the convention; but, judged by its effect upon the audience, the force of its appeals upon the heart, and

the devotion it enkindled, it very much exceeded all others preached on the occasion."

On his way to Akron he fell in with many brethren, at Buffalo, whom he had never before seen, and together they embarked on one of the elegant steamers which ply between that city and Cleaveland. Mr. Cook very soon got into conversation with a clergyman, the preacher of another gospel, and quite a spirited controversy on doctrinal points ensued. This was continued until near the hour for retiring, and closed with mutual expressions of regard.

Scarcely had the subject of these pages laid his head upon his pillow, ere his somnambulic effusions arrested the attention of the passengers. A hymn was announced for singing, time was given for this exercise, a most fervent prayer was offered, another hymn, and then a sermon followed. The discourse assumed somewhat the character of a dialogue, and seemed to be the counterpart of the conversation had during the evening with the above-named preacher. He proposed questions, waited for answers, then repeated these answers and replied to them, with a directness and force that thrilled every listener. Whatever may have been wanting to complete his triumph, during the conversation in his normal state, was now achieved without a seeming effort; and so convincing were his arguments, and so pertinent his replies to all objections, that, with great unanimity, friends and foes of his doctrine, who stood around, eager to catch every word, accorded to him victory. Another hymn was proposed, and he slept as usual through the remainder of the night.

During the meetings of this convention, I think it was, a place of entertainment was assigned to Mr. Cook at a public house, where he stopped with an acquaintance of his wife. On retiring to bed, he casually remarked to the stranger that he must not be frightened if in his sleep he should begin to talk, and added that he was considered something of a somnambulist. The stranger made light of the suggestion, and declared that he had "yet to feel the fear of any man, asleep or awake." The light was extinguished, and both were soon locked in the embrace of Morpheus. At length the spell came on, and the somnambulist began to talk. His companion began to shake him, with a view of arousing him to consciousness. But the sleeper only talked the faster and louder. The stranger spoke to him, but he answered not. There was a peculiar power in his voice at such times, and, as words poured from the depths of his soul and fell upon the ears of his startled friend, the latter felt his courage forsaking him, and resolved to speak to the keeper of the house. A moment more, and some burst of this strange eloquence kindled a deeper awe of the now dread presence. The stranger started up with a view of leaping from the bed, and, just at the moment that he was about to spring, Mr. Cook caught him by the feet. This assault was wholly unexpected, and one by no means calculated to allay the excitement, under which the valorous man was making good his retreat. To extricate himself, putting all the vigor of his nerves to the test, he attempted to scale the foot-board; but the grasp was too firm, and only the *head* reached the *destination of the feet*, on the floor! Held for a moment in this uncomfortable posi-

tion, suspended by his feet from the top of the aforesaid foot-board, he shouted "murder" most lustily, and thus summoned to his aid his host and a few sympathizing friends, who, seeing his "*suspense*," took him down — alive!

It was some time before Mr. Cook could be aroused to consciousness and made acquainted with the nature of the uproar he had so innocently caused, and which had brought so many at that hour to his sleeping apartment. The stranger begged to be excused from farther companionship with him during that night, and sought to justify his plea by declaring that he was a dangerous *maniac*.

This anecdote I received from his own lips, and have given it from memory. It is possible I am mistaken in regard to the time and place where the scene occurred, but the facts are substantially as narrated.

On his return from Akron he found his wife declining under a renewed attack of fever, from which she did not fully recover until about the middle of October.

He continued to reside in Rochester until the following spring, when he removed to Fairport, where he remained until he left New York for New England, in October, 1845.

CHAPTER XX.

LABORS IN VICTOR.

Early in the spring of 1843, while he yet resided in Rochester, Mr. Cook closed his labors in Churchville, to accept an invitation from the Universalist society in Victor to become its pastor.

Here I may remark, that, when it was understood that he was about to dissolve his connection with the societies to which he first ministered, he received several very pressing invitations to visit different localities and preach with a view of a permanent settlement. As early as March, 1841, I find among the letters preserved a very urgent request for such a visit from Perry, where, at that time, was one of the most flourishing societies of Universalists in Western New York. And now, when it was known that he was about to leave Churchville, the society in Rochester came forward and solicited his acceptance of its pastorship. But, although he felt a deep interest in the cause of Universalism in that city, he doubted his ability to meet the expectations of his friends there, and consequently declined the honor tendered him, and recommended to their favorable notice the Rev. Charles Hammond.

We have said that Mr. Cook doubted his ability to

meet the expectations of his friends in Rochester, and hence declined their invitation to settle there. Whatever excuse he may have pleaded at the time, "this," says his widow, "was the real cause of his declining the pastorship of the Rochester society. He said the same of himself then that he afterwards said of Bro. D. when he heard that he was going to B.: 'It is a great responsibility for a young man to assume, to accept the pastorship of a city society, with its various and multiplied demands for labor. If he succeed, *well*, but the chances, many to one, are against him; and if he does not succeed, the consequences of his failure are far more disastrous to his reputation than would result from a failure in a more humble position.'"

After supplying the pulpit in Rochester a few Sabbaths, he decided to accept the charge of the Victor society, and entered upon his duties there in April or May, 1843. From this time he directed his efforts to the closing up of his affairs in Rochester, and the following summer relieved himself from the responsibilities of conducting the publication of the Luminary. This gave him more time to devote to the more grateful duties of his calling.

The society in Victor he found very much as he previously found the one in Fairport. The meetings were very thinly attended; the few who were punctual were far from being hopeful, and there was a chilling languor in every department of the society. The meeting-house, situated on a commanding eminence, presented a somewhat imposing appearance as seen from a distance, but within, it had neither convenience nor artistic beauty to

recommend it to favor. The pews were constructed after a somewhat antiquated model, and presented to the eye a succession of square *pens*, adorned with neither paint nor cushions. Carpets represented a species of vanity which had been sedulously guarded against by the society, and the uncovered floor loudly echoed the tread of the rustic worshipper. There was neither church nor Sabbath-school. Yet there were some true hearts, deeply in love with the Gospel as they had received it, ready to be led on and upward in the Christian course, who had been waiting for another faithful servant of Christ to come and break to them the bread of everlasting life. They hailed the advent of Mr. Cook among them as the earnest of a brighter day, and were ready to receive him, to bid him godspeed, and to pledge to him a faithful coöperation. This was all he desired.

It is sufficient to say that his ministry in Victor was so like that in Fairport, as regards success and the means of obtaining it, as to justify me in referring the reader to the preceding chapter for an account of his labors here. The pews in the house were removed, and replaced with others of modern construction; the desk remodelled, and the whole aspect of the interior essentially improved. A Sabbath-school was organized, encouraged and prospered. His reputation as an advocate for organized churches and the ordinances of baptism and the holy supper, was well known to the society in Victor when he received the invitation to accept its pastorship. The way for the establishment of these auxiliaries to a successful ministry was therefore open before him, and he had little difficulty in bringing them to bear on the

mind of his charge. The church organized here, owing probably to the shorter period of his connection with it, did not number so many members as did the one in Fairport. But when he left it, he had the satisfaction of looking upon it as a germ, which, when more fully developed under the genial influence of an efficient dispensation of the word, would bear much fruit to the glory of the Lord. It started under the most favorable circumstances, thirty-seven adult persons giving in their names for membership; most of whom afterwards evinced a deep interest in its prosperity. To this number additions were made from time to time, and the whole communion was considered in a healthy and prosperous condition when he, by accepting an invitation from Providence, terminated his connection with it.

He had been preaching in Victor about eight months, when he signified to his friends there and in Fairport his intention to remove his family from Rochester, and to find a residence within the limits of one of the societies to which he preached. This announcement was hailed with satisfaction, and each society met him with generous overtures, hoping thereby to secure his preference and the benefits accruing from a ministry of one living among them. But Fairport was nearer to the city, nearer also to the home of his wife, and perhaps nearer to his heart (he having preached there nearly two years longer than in Victor), and he decided to make this his home; and, with no desire to disparage any other, I think I am warranted in saying that it proved to be the happiest home he ever found. Several circumstances conspired to render it so. The society there exhibited a wonderful

degree of unanimity in their appreciation of his labors, and their confidence and coöperation lightened the burden of his toil, and laid him under many obligations of gratitude.

His widow, in reviewing his labors here, remarks: "Much might be said on the influence which a society is capable of exerting for the success of the pastor's efforts, by a willingness to coöperate with him in all those measures which he proposes for the advancement of the cause in which they are mutually engaged, and especially when these measures are characterized by wisdom and prudence. This constituted one of the chief excellences of the Fairport society. Its members seemed to take special delight in attempting to carry out the suggestions of the pastor. There was a degree of promptness about their action, too, that my husband always admired, and afterwards held up as an example to others. Let him appoint a society, church, conference, or special meeting, and *at the time* the prominent members of the society were there, ready to know the will of the pastor, and if need be to labor for its accomplishment, or to counsel with him on the expediency of his plans."

Such a society is certainly deserving of high praise, if, indeed, fidelity to duty is ever to be praised. In too many instances, pastors are discouraged, and the more faithful members are disheartened, by the indifference of a large portion of the society, who, with an easy confidence in those disposed to discharge their obligations, are willing to trust everything to *their* direction, and all labor to their hands; everything except, perhaps, the grateful pastime of *finding fault!* This, in considera-

tion of other indulgences so freely granted to their more active brethren, they claim as their special prerogative; and this high and noble function they discharge with a zest and a relish that is very amusing, if not gratifying, to behold. Call a meeting, and they are not there; the most trifling excuse is pleaded in justification of their absence. Repeat the call, and they are the first to marvel at neglect, and the foremost to encourage it by example. Ask their advice, and none are more ready to give; ask their personal efforts, or a contribution of money, and none are more easily astounded by a glance at the extravagance of societies and the personal sacrifices required to sustain them. They detect with a wonderful facility, and criticise with unmerciful severity, the faults of the preacher, and the blunders of the choir; they ask for, as if they had a right to demand, perfection in both, and yet are seldom willing to put forth a single effort to procure either. They pride themselves on their high privilege of sitting in judgment on the action of the society, which they have condescended to bless with their fellowship. If a tax is assessed, or a subscription is proposed,— no matter for what object,— at a meeting to which they had been specially invited, and which they had with becoming dignity neglected to attend, they are lost in the abyss of their own profound astonishment at the financiering of upstart officers, and the conniving of their fanatical friends. *They* have not been consulted, and they threaten all manner of disasters to the society, to be entailed upon it by their withdrawing from it! Heaven save it when thus left to itself!

I repeat that such a society as that in Fairport, as

described by Mrs. Cook, is deserving of high praise, for a virtue quite too rare among religious societies at the present day. And we would earnestly commend its example, in the matter to which we have specially referred, to the attention of others seeking that prosperity which is certain under ordinary circumstances to result from a "unity of the spirit."

There was a similar spirit evinced in the action of the society at Victor, and hence its success under the ministry of Mr. Cook, and hence his happiness in his connection with it.

Other circumstances which served to add to the felicities of his home in Fairport might be briefly mentioned here. He had relieved himself from the cares and the responsibilities of a publisher,— a position obviously not his own,— and was now congratulating himself on the results of an experience, which, though quite expensive, was deemed worth more than the price paid for it. As a preacher, he ranked high among "the common people," and his efforts were signally blessed to their improvement. He began to feel that he possessed the esteem of the denomination, and that, sustained by this, it was his duty to extend the sphere of his usefulness. He therefore gave himself unreservedly to the duties of his profession; and, as ever, in the performance of these duties he found the high reward of faithfulness. And then the burden which had, during his residence in Rochester, oppressed and worn down his companion, was now most sensibly relieved, and under the grateful change her energies were recruited and her health essentially improved.

Few women voluntarily assume such responsibilities and cares as did Mrs. C. during her brief residence in the city — assume and discharge them for the sake of saving a husband from the embarrassment and humiliation of debt. Such efforts are not always appreciated by the world. Many persons, and especially females, who are wont to boast more of the beauty of their hands than of their hearts, are willing, even in our own country, to speak lightly of domestic duties as belonging to the vulgar alone — of the performance of these duties as a surrender of their claims to the distinction of being a lady, and as being wholly unsuited to the rank and dignity of a minister's wife. Even societies sometimes are found gravely endorsing these ridiculous effusions of *lady idlers*, and repeating them not only at home, but whispering them from ear to ear in the sanctuary of God! Societies! did I say? I ought to recall the assertion. It is only a small portion of any society that ever complains of the pastor's wife for not neglecting her household affairs to play the lady in the parlor, at the expense of her husband's interest; for not exhausting his resources in the decoration of her person, and in spoiling his children with assurances that "paradise" will be "regained" when the curse of labor is removed from the descendants of ministers. It is not the discreet and the judicious that most readily detect the perfect example of a pastor's wife in the conduct of her who either leaves her house in disorder, or regulates it by a multiplicity of domestics which with his limited income she can ill afford, for the purpose of making ceremonious calls in the parish — calls which but too often subject

the industrious to inconvenience and tempt the idle to gossip. No such complaint comes from this source in any society. Persons of this stamp see that, with very few exceptions, the ministers in our order are obliged to husband their resources in order to meet their expenses, however economically arranged. And they cannot fail to discern the characteristics of a true lady, and of a true Christian, in the woman who prudently graduates her expenditures to her means, and infinitely prefers to labor with her own hands, for the purpose of laying in store a trifling sum from year to year, to that idleness which exhausts all, to those fashionable calls, so gratifying to some and so disgusting to others, which require time to make, or even to an officiousness in society matters, which, though sometimes demanded at her hands, is seldom credited to Christian motives, and seldom fails to provoke the severest animadversions from the paragons of propriety, with which all societies abound.

Mrs. C. had been trained to household duties, and saw no impropriety in discharging them at an expense of personal ease, rather than shrink from them in an emergency which seemed to demand their performance — an emergency brought on by a mistaken policy on the part of her husband to advance the truth. But now her cares were less, and more time was afforded her to devote to the interests of the society to which he ministered. And suffice it to say, she did not neglect her duties in this respect.

In the preceding pages I have said but little of the interest which Mr. Cook evinced in the cause of temperance in early youth. We have seen him, yielding to the

dictates of filial piety, occupying a position and pursuing a calling which brought him into contact with and disclosed to him the magnitude of the evils of intemperance. And in meditating upon these evils, in after life, as they appeared to him then, he felt that it was his duty as the servant of Christ, who "went about doing good," to use his influence for the promotion of temperance. He saw no other way to discharge his entire obligations to his Master, and to the world, and therefore entered upon this beneficent reform as a work required at his hands, and from which he could not shrink without betraying the trust reposed in him, and proving recreant to his position in society. Principle and not policy therefore governed his action as a temperance reformer. And to this I think must be ascribed at once his moderation and success. By his *moderation*, I mean no lack of zeal or activity, but his uniform kindness of manner in speaking of the inebriate and of those engaged in the liquor traffic. While he pleaded earnestly with the former to forsake his cups, and with the latter to abandon the traffic so frutiful of all the horrors of intemperance, he seldom engaged in a denunciation of either. He looked upon both as children of a common Father, and heirs of a common salvation. As such he treated them. Though blinded by interest, or subdued and degraded by appetite, he appealed to the deeper sentiments of our common humanity in both, and thus touched a chord that vibrated to the earnestness of his appeals.

Many that heard him on this subject recall the peculiarities of his address as the most effective of any to which they have ever listened. At one moment the

audience before him was convulsed with laughter as he dwelt upon some of the amusing developments of intemperance; the next, as he passed gradually to the degradation which it brings upon the inebriate; to the wretchedness it engenders in the family circle; to the terrible crimes which flow from it; to the awful ruin, physical and moral, which is among its inevitable results; as he painted with all the force of truth its desolating power, the heart throbbed, the lip quivered, and the eye filled with tears. And under these appeals, how many hearts were born into the kingdom of temperance, God only knows.

As an illustration of his power in addressing the masses on this subject, I would refer to a noted incident which adorned his ministry in Victor. After much had been accomplished in behalf of the reform in that village, there came a time when all efforts seemed to prove unavailing. A most discouraging apathy, for a season, pervaded the whole community. The aid of distinguished lecturers from abroad was sought and obtained — apparently in vain. Appetite mocked their appeals, and the evident satisfaction of the rum-dealer proclaimed the dawn of a brighter day for the *spiritual* fraternity.

Such days of darkness are common to all enterprises having for their object the mitigation of evils and the amelioration of the moral condition of the race. They may be regarded as the necessary incidents of all reforms — the shading which lends to the picture of their success and their triumph, the outspeaking beauty and glory that so effectually compel our admiration. The church of Christ has been no stranger to them — their shadows

have fallen about her pathway from the first call to repentance down to the present moment. The garden and the cross, the desertion of disciples and the defection of believers, are but too familiar examples.

Amid one of these seasons of darkness and discouragement, when the cause of temperance in Victor had apparently made

> "A pause,
> A solemn pause, prophetic of its end;"

when its enemies began to exult, and its friends to grow weary and disheartened; when meeting after meeting of the few that could be rallied had been held, and not a single signature had been obtained to the pledge, notwithstanding eloquent advocates had urged its importance; it was at such a moment that he consented to deliver a lecture in behalf of the cause, and suggested to the committee the method of calling the meeting before which he was to appear. The evening came, and a crowd assembled. "He gave," says Mr. Lovejoy, "one of his thrilling and soul-stirring lectures. The effect was magical. *Seventy-three* persons, moved by his appeal, immediately signed the pledge. The case speaks for itself."

I have already alluded to his sermon before the United States Convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1843, and to the high commendations which it received from brethren in various parts of the country. Among its most devoted admirers was one residing in Reading, Pa., who on returning home gave such a glowing description of its effects upon those who heard it, that he was commissioned by the Universalist society in that borough to

write to its author, with a view of securing a visit from him, which he did in the following words:

"Bro. J. M. Cook: The people down here are in raptures with our account of your sermon at the United States Convention, and very much desire that you should pay us a visit this winter. Can you do so? When? How long can you stay? And on what terms? are questions which I wish you would answer at your earliest convenience. Yours, &c.,

"S. A."

I give this as a sample of the invitations he had, during his connection with the Victor society, to visit different places and preach with a view of a permanent settlement, many of which invitations resulted from his sermon in Akron.

In February, 1844, he received a letter of inquiry from a friend in Albany, who was desirous of knowing whether he would accept an invitation from the society in that city if tendered to him; and the writer, after having given him an account of the resources of the society, the salary which it had been in the habit of paying, etc., urges him to allow his name to go before the society as a candidate. The society in Albany has ever been regarded by the brethren in the Empire State as occupying one of the most important positions in the denomination. Albany is the capital of the state, and for several months during the year the legislature is in session there. And it has been observed that the members who remain there over the Sabbath are many of them prone to forget the creed

taught them in childhood, and which the conventionalities of home compel them to support, and to seek out those religious teachers who cherish more consistent and cheering views of God and his government than they have been accustomed to hear from the sacred desk. Many gladly avail themselves of the opportunity to hear disputed texts of Scripture discussed and explained in accordance with that faith which sees, in the results of the divine government, the salvation of the world. And hence the society in Albany has felt the importance of securing to itself the labors of men qualified for the place — men capable of sending forth an influence favorable to its own reputation and to the cause of truth, which should reach every part of the state. And the counsels of this society, before the time of which I write, had prevailed in securing such labors.* It was therefore no mean compliment to the talents and the reputation of Mr. Cook, that he was solicited to take the pastorship of this society. But he felt that the time had not yet come for him to dissolve existing pastoral connections, and he declined the honor which he was assured would be certain to result from permitting his name to go before the society.

The society in Victor continued to prosper under his ministry. The church was from time to time receiving accessions, and the Sabbath-school was fast becoming an important auxiliary to both.

He never learned the virtue of moderation in any case.

* Rev. I. D. Williamson, D. D., and Rev. S. R. Smith, two of the ablest preachers in the denomination, had established and maintained an exalted character for the Universalist pulpit in Albany.

He never spared himself. He always found work enough to do, and, however engaged, he worked with all his might. In March, 1845, he felt that it was important that his lot in Rochester should be enclosed with a picket fence. The following letter will inform the reader *how* the work was accomplished, and the result of the same upon his health.

"PERRINTON, June 1st, 1845.

"DEAR BROTHER: — This is the first opportunity that I have found, since I received your letter, to write you an answer. I have not been at home, with the exception of Saturday and Sunday evenings, since the first of April, unless called upon to attend funerals or transact some other important business. I will give the reason. I had nearly twenty rods of picket fence to build around my lot in the city of Rochester. This fence, if built by contract, would have cost me at least five dollars per rod. Such a bill I was not able to pay. But my fence must be built. I am not a carpenter, nor the son of a carpenter, and yet I had the hardihood, right in the face and eyes of all mechanics (especially those who were looking for the job), to work myself into the belief that I could do nearly all this work with my own hands. I commenced, and have finished it. And 'tongue can never express' what a tedious job it was to me. I spent all my time there with the exceptions named above. It will now cost me, with what I have hired, about thirty dollars. So you see what I have saved in a pecuniary point, as Paul says, 'laboring with my own hands.' This will probably be the last job of the kind *very soon*.

"I was a little astonished to hear that you had not received my last letter, dated some time in February. Are Boston and South Boston the same? To which place I directed I have now forgotten, but to one, *sure*. In this letter I gave you full particulars, in answer to the one you wrote me last fall. I think, if you will look, you will yet find it among your papers.

"I have just returned from our State Convention held at Cortland. We had quite an interesting meeting, though I think it fell behind some I had attended before. The preaching was of a style which does not suit my taste. It might be called *pretty*, but in my opinion this kind of preaching never will awaken interest in and devotion to the cause of Christ, never will arouse sinners, call them to repentance, and lead them to enjoy the Spirit, and do the works of faith. Others think differently — they have a right so to think.

"I was glad to hear you speak so encouragingly of your location, society and future prospects. May the Lord continue to bless and prosper you. It always does me good to hear of the prosperity of Zion. I hope the time is not far distant when her watchmen shall begin to see eye to eye — now they are only permitted to hear of each other by distant sounds.

"Our cause is not prospering much in this region. My societies seem to form an exception — are still in a good condition. They have just been repairing their churches at an expense of about two hundred dollars each. They give me a salary of six hundred dollars. Last year I received for weddings and funerals about one hundred and fifty dollars, and a very fair donation from each

society. I shall probably close my labors here at the end of this year. I shall endeavor to seek a location where I can preach all of the time. I intend to start on a journey east about the first of July. I shall first go to Troy and Albany — where, after that, I hardly know. I had an invitation to go to Reading, Pa., but it was too far away. If I cannot find a place that suits me, I shall still continue where I am, or in Victor, for another year. I want a society that is now in a prosperous condition, that has a church organized, and a Sabbath-school, etc. I want to settle in a place of considerable importance, and where I can receive a salary of eight hundred or a thousand dollars. Such locations are scarce, and yet they may be found. Whether I shall visit Boston during my absence from home, I am not able now to say. I think not, however, till September, when the convention meets. If I attend that meeting, my wife will accompany me.

"I have not heard from Lyman nor De Witt since last fall. Emily is married. This will probably be no news to you. William has removed to Alexander, Genesee county. He has a very fair location, and will do well for a season. The last that I heard from mother she was well. I shall visit home when I go east, and endeavor to learn more of her condition.

"My own affairs are beginning to assume a better aspect. Though I have had a hard row to hoe for two years past, yet I think that I can now see the end. My house and lot will bring me at least two thousand five hundred dollars. It is a desirable location, and one that will sell readily when I get ready to dispose of it. I hope that you will write me again soon. My health, in consequence of the

labor which I have performed, is not as good as usual. My family usually enjoy good health. My oldest boy is not very rugged; the youngest, now two years and a half old, is a very healthy child; both *white heads*, but *wide awake!*

"One remark, and I close. You spoke in relation to my preaching,—your fears when I began, your confidence now. But *I* have not as much confidence now as when I began. Yours is too highly wrought. I am not a popular speaker, and am certainly a small preacher. Remember me and mine to you and yours.

"Your brother by blood and faith,

"JAMES M. COOK."

I have inserted this letter here for the purpose,—

1. Of showing his industrial habits,—his respect for what he calls "laboring with his own hands." Through life he regarded manual labor as one of the beneficent ordinances of divine Providence, and never felt that he was degrading himself by rendering obedience to it.

2. Of showing his preference in regard to the different styles of preaching. He was by no means incapable of appreciating beauty in composition. He admired it. He was delighted with the glowing drapery in which true genius ever clothes its noblest thoughts. But there is a style far different from this, a style which he aptly characterizes as "*pretty*" (a designation which his generosity prompted him to give, as least calculated to offend the paternal partiality of the devotees of this style), a style in which words jingle and ideas are lamentably deficient; a style in which thoughts are so deeply buried in their roseate verbiage as to challenge detection or

analysis; a style which provoked the execration of the poet, who condemned it in those burning words:

> "'T is my perfect scorn!
> Object of my implacable disgust!
> What! will a man play tricks, will he indulge
> A silly, fond conceit of his fair form,
> And just proportion, fashionable mien
> And *pretty* face, in presence of his God?
> *Or will he seek to dazzle* ME *with tropes,*
> *As with the diamond on his lily hand,*
> *And play his brilliant parts before my eyes,*
> *When I am hungry for the bread of life?*
> He mocks his Maker; prostitutes and shames
> His noble office, and, instead of truth,
> Displaying his own beauty, starves his flock.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,
> Preserve the church, and lay not careless hands
> On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn."

His own habits of thought led him to adopt a different style. He based all his hopes of success in the ministry on the principles of the Gospel of Christ. These alone, he believed, would "awaken interest in and devotion to the cause of Christ." And he sincerely regretted any seeming neglect of these principles in the labors of the desk, any substitution of fancy sketches for their practical bearing.

3. The letter shows his desire for a single charge capable of affording him a competent support, and already supplied with "an organized church and a Sabbath-school." He felt that he had been a *pioneer* long enough. He was now willing to exchange this service for that of a pastor.

4. It shows his estimate of himself. Notwithstanding popular applause was his, he was not prepared to lay the flattering unction to his soul that he was indeed "a popular speaker." He had learned to distrust his abilities, while many voices echoed his praise.

Soon after the date of this letter, his intentions to visit New England were made known to at least two societies, and he received from each of these an invitation to visit, and preach one Sabbath or more. Hartford and Providence proved the rival claimants of his services. He visited the former city in August, and spent two Sabbaths there. His services were highly appreciated, and he had some reasons to expect an invitation to settle there. But the society decided to pay *another* about one-half the salary which he demanded as a condition of settlement,— all he desired,— and thus secured a pastorship of less than six months' duration,— *dear at that!*

In September he visited Providence, and, after due deliberation, decided to make that his first, and, as it proved, his last home in New England. During the interval between the two Sabbaths which he supplied in Providence, he visited Boston, and preached before the United States Convention in session in that city. His discourse on this occasion did not detract from the honor which his preaching in Akron before the same body had secured to him, nor diminish his chances for a location in the second city in New England.

In taking leave of his friends in Fairport and Victor, preparatory to removing to Providence, he must needs engage in that service which occupied the time and the thoughts of the Master during his last interview with his

disciples before he suffered. He invited all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ to remain, while he administered for the last time this solemn rite of the church. Few left the house, and less remained unmoved. Tears suffused many cheeks, as the remembrance of the past and the prospect of the future alternately engaged the minds of the assembled throng. He went among them when they were depressed with a consciousness of their weakness, when they had no church, when their minds were darkened, and they entertained prejudices against the scene which, as his last pastoral service, now so moved and melted their hearts. Under his ministry they had been abundantly prospered, and they could but see that he had chosen a fitting service for the occasion; one in which, as they were about to part, they could, over the emblems of the broken body of Jesus, pledge their fidelity to one another and to the cause in which they had been mutually engaged. To this season, and the petitions of the retiring pastor in behalf of his churches in Fairport and Victor, Mr. Lovejoy refers in the quotation which we have given from his letter.

CHAPTER XXI.

UNIVERSALISM IN PROVIDENCE.

In order to give the reader any just idea of the influences which surrounded Mr. Cook during his stay in Rhode Island, I propose in this chapter to sketch briefly the history of Universalism in Providence. Trusting that such a sketch will not prove wholly unacceptable to the general reader, and that it will be duly appreciated, as a means of judging of his character, by those more conversant with his labors here, I submit it as due to his life, and to that cause to which his life was consecrated and sacrificed.

Providence was among the first places in New England visited by that distinguished apostle of Universalism, the Rev. John Murray. Here he preached the great salvation in the First Baptist church, and his labors created no inconsiderable sensation among its members. Some of these, after examination of the subject, avowed their faith in the restitution of all things, and were consequently excommunicated for heresy. Nothing daunted by this act of the church, they continued their investigations of the divine word, comparing their newly-awakened faith with *its* teachings, and found joy unspeakable in noting the harmonious suggestions of both.

They met from house to house on the Sabbath, and in meditating upon the purposes of the Father took sweet counsel together. These led the way, and others soon followed. The number of believers was gradually increased. And now they longed for some one to come and break to them the bread of life.

They sent for Mr. Murray. He came; and their hearts did burn within them, as, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, he preached to them Jesus as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. They subsequently invited the Rev. Hosea Ballou to spend a Sabbath with them occasionally. He did so; and a few men still survive who witnessed his first efforts among this small but hopeful band of believers.

From these efforts an influence went forth to prepare the way for the organization of a Universalist society. The friends of the cause acquired confidence in themselves; encouraged and strengthened each other; often found sympathy where least they expected it; and as early as 1820 began very freely to discuss the propriety and expediency of organizing a society and building a church. But it was not till April 10, 1821, that a public meeting was called for the accomplishment of this result. At this meeting twenty-five men were present, who, with a single exception, signed the resolution by which they formed themselves into a society. Of this society Rufus Waterman was chosen president, and Samuel W. Wheeler clerk.

At the next meeting of the society, a committee was appointed to make inquiry, and report a suitable lot on which to build a house for public worship. The lot on

the corner of Union and Westminster streets was recommended, and a subscription for its purchase, amounting to two thousand dollars, was readily filled.

As yet the society had no stated preaching on the Sabbath. A proposition was submitted, on the 14th of August, to engage a pastor; but it did not succeed. It would seem the friends were determined, before settling a pastor, to complete their organization by procuring of the General Assembly an act of incorporation, which was done at the October session, 1821.

This step taken, the society extended an invitation to the Rev. Fayette Mace to spend a few weeks in its service, with a view of a permanent settlement, and on the 7th of December following called him to its pastoral care. He accepted the invitation, and entered upon his new field of labor in April, 1822.

In January, 1822, seven thousand five hundred dollars having been subscribed for the erection of a church on the lot already obtained by the society, it was voted to proceed immediately to the work. "The corner-stone was laid," according to the Record, "in the presence of a vast concourse of people." In it was deposited a silver plate, bearing the inscription, "The First Universalist Society in Providence was incorporated by an act of the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island at their October session, 1821."

"The corner-stone of this edifice designed for the service of Almighty God, through his son Jesus Christ, was laid by the Rev. Fayette Mace, on the 3d day of June, 1822."

This house was built of stone, contained on the floor

one hundred and twenty-eight pews, and cost about twenty thousand dollars. It was dedicated to the service of God on the 20th of November, 1822. Sermon, by the Rev. Hosea Ballou, of Boston. The day following fifteen thousand dollars' worth of pews were sold, and in May, 1823, the society owed only two thousand dollars. These facts, to a very great extent, reveal the character of the men engaged in this enterprise.

Mr. Mace did not remain long with the society after the church was dedicated. He very much surprised his charge, one Sabbath morning, by announcing his intention to preach his valedictory in the afternoon. His motives for so doing, at the time, were wrapped in mystery, and have never since been fully explained. Most likely he felt that his labors were not sufficiently appreciated, and that another occupied that place in the regards of his people which was peculiarly his own. The valedictory was preached according to notice, and was speedily followed by his removal from the place.

After hearing several candidates, the society extended an invitation to the Rev. David Pickering, then of Hudson, to take its pastorship. Accepting the invitation, he commenced his labors in Providence in May, 1823. He was installed June 4th. Sermon, by the Rev. Mr. Bisbee, of Hartford, Connecticut.

Through the instrumentality of Mr. Pickering's labors a good degree of interest was awakened in the cause of Universalism, and the prospects of the society were very flattering indeed. But at the very moment when the friends felt that they had great cause of gratitude to God for the success which had crowned their efforts, and

for congratulating themselves on a brightening future, a sudden blight for a season wasted their hopes. A fire broke out* in the vicinity of their church, and all efforts to save it from the devouring element proved fruitless.

Rumor affirms that while this beautiful edifice was wrapped in flames some of the adversaries of Universalism remarked, in the hearing of Rufus Waterman, Esq., president of the society, that they were glad this sanctuary of Satan was not spared. Whereupon Mr. Waterman coolly replied, "*The snow shall never fall upon the spot where that house stood.*" And thus far the saying has been verified. The house was rebuilt, and dedicated to the service of God early the ensuing winter.

This blow fell heavily upon the society. The house was insured for three thousand dollars only — a sum little more than sufficient to pay the society debt. But noble spirits ever prove their superiority to adversity; and of such spirits was this society composed. A meeting was immediately called at the town-house, and a subscription-paper was opened, and *twelve thousand dollars* were pledged for the erection of a new church. The present beautiful edifice was the result.

The day after this house was dedicated, the choice of pews was sold at auction, and the society realized from the sale about twenty-five hundred dollars over and above the entire cost of the building, thus again demonstrating the energy and the liberality of its members.

Mr. Pickering continued his labors with this society until October, 1835, when, at his request, the pastoral connection was dissolved, and he removed to New-York.

* May, 1825.

As a man and a Christian, he occupied a very high place, not only in the regards of his own special charge, but in the regards of the whole community. The earlier years of his ministry in Providence were fruitful of good to the cause of the Master. A church was organized, and many members were received into its communion. A Sabbath-school was also organized, sustained and prospered.

It may be proper to add that Mr. Pickering was one of a few Universalist ministers who about this time took strong ground against what they were pleased to term "*ultra Universalism*," and advocated the doctrine of future limited punishment. He became ambitious of being known as a Restorationist, and not a Universalist. His efforts to create a division in the denomination lost for him friends and influence in Providence. He made himself somewhat obnoxious to his charge, by confining his exchanges exclusively to the little band of Restorationists, with whom he had now become identified, and they formally requested him to exchange with Universalists.

Thus matters stood, when, by the death of the Rev. Mr. Mitchell, the pastorship of the Duane-street church, in New York, was rendered vacant. Mr. Pickering accepted an invitation to succeed that venerable servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In November, 1835, Rev. W. S. Balch, then of Claremont, New Hampshire, received an invitation to succeed Mr. Pickering in Providence, and he entered upon his duties as pastor of the society in March, 1836.

Soon after negotiations for the settlement of Mr.

Balch were completed, Rev. Matthew Hale Smith preached for the society a couple of Sabbaths. He judged that his labors were favorably received, and, true to the instincts of *his* nature, he concluded that if Mr. Balch could be induced to give up his engagement, he should be immediately invited to the pastoral charge of the society. Acting upon the suggestions of his corrupt and selfish heart, he sat down, and, dissembling his own hand-writing, addressed a note to Mr. Balch, assuring him that, although he was the pastor-elect of the society in Providence, there was much opposition to him, *especially among the ladies*, and advising him, as a friend, to apprize the society of his intention to remain in Claremont. He signed this communication, "*A member of the society.*"

Mr. Balch was not long in detecting the contemptible fraud thus attempted, and in charging it upon its real author. After denying this charge again and again, Mr. Smith confessed his guilt and meanness in the transaction, and, with apparent penitence, earnestly sued for the forgiveness of his ministering brethren. And, through the intercession of the Rev. Dr. Ballou in his behalf, he was continued in the fellowship of the denomination, till at length it pleased God to deliver Universalists from the responsibility of his actions, by leading him to a renunciation of their faith.

For several years previous to Mr. Pickering's leaving Providence, his society stood connected with an organization known as an association of "Universal Restorationists." Hence Mr. Balch deemed it his duty to disclaim, in advance, all allegiance to Associations, Coun-

cils, or Conventions of an ecclesiastic character, which, in consequence of the peculiar relations of the society, might possibly claim to exercise jurisdiction over him in matters of faith. He thus prudently hinted to the society that he could not be expected to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor, and endorse all his speculative opinions on the subject of future punishment. Though candid, and characteristic of the man, this announcement of Mr. Balch was far from being grateful to all the members of the society. Nor did his presence among them serve fully to allay the prejudice his candor had awakened. At the expiration of his first year's service, a resolution was brought forward, setting forth in strong language the conviction that the best interests of the society would be promoted, and the cause of Christian truth subserved, by seeking a pastor that should feel it his duty to declare unto the people the Scripture doctrine of reward and punishment in a future state. This resolution, however, met with but little favor; the subject was indefinitely postponed, and Mr. Balch was reëlected pastor, and an increased salary was voted him. Thus the Universalist character of the society was vindicated, and, to its praise be it said, ever since it has been true to its name.

During the last two years of Mr. Balch's residence in Providence, the whole state was agitated with questions of political reform. The charter granted by Charles the Second was, by a large proportion of the citizens, felt to be unsuited to the spirit of the age in many of its provisions, and unworthy to be supported by a republican people. And hence the demand for a constitution adapted to the genius of the republic, and securing to every

male citizen of suitable age the right of suffrage. This demand was most strenuously resisted by the ruling party. Mr. Balch sympathized with "*the people*," and frankly avowed this sympathy, both in public and in private. His zeal was soon trumpeted abroad, and, at the earnest solicitation of friends in country towns, he addressed large and enthusiastic audiences in vindication of popular rights.

The origin of the Second Society dates from about the fourth year of Mr. Balch's ministry, and the circumstances leading to its organization are presented in the following note to the writer, bearing date New York, June 20, 1853.

"Bro. Cook: I removed to Providence in March, 1836, and took the pastoral charge of the First Universalist Society. Rev. Mr. Pickering had removed, the fall previous, to New York. The society was, at the time, much divided, principally upon the question of future punishment and 'ultra' Universalism, as some called it. There was no deep or settled hostility on that subject, and the breach was soon healed by ceasing from the discussion of it, and the withdrawal of one or two of the more zealous partisans of one side.

"From the commencement of that era of peace, we went steadily and prosperously forward, till, in two years, every pew in the church was rented, and generally well occupied. On the fourth year of my settlement there, it was found impossible to accommodate all those who wished to attend, and a meeting of the society was called to inquire what measures should be taken to furnish

room for such as wished to attend the preaching of a world's salvation. At that meeting, a committee was appointed, consisting, if I remember rightly, of Brs. Barzillai Cranston, Richard Salisbury, and one or two others, whose names I have forgotten. This committee reported to a subsequent meeting, which was well attended, that by setting the pews nearer together some eighteen more could be added, and that pews could be built in the gallery, which might be extended a few feet in front, so as to admit three tiers, instead of two, and thereby accommodate more people; but, as the church was spacious and already convenient, it was recommended to leave it as it was, and further, whenever it should be deemed advisable, to organize a second society, on the east side of the river.

"Some months afterwards, such a society was formed, in part of members of my society, without any apparent diminution of our numbers or means. Rev. J. N. Parker was called to the pastoral charge of the Second Society, and continued with it till his removal to Pawtucket, when Rev. Wm. Jackson, the 'man of sorrows,' whose fame, on his conversion from the Baptists, far excelled his merits as a preacher and as a man, succeeded him, and, in consequence, found an opportunity to add another chapter to his sorrows — that society might have added several to theirs. After him, Rev. W. S. Ballou ministered temporarily to that congregation for a few months, and after him Rev. James Gallager, now of Easton, Pa. On the breaking out of the famous 'rebellion,' in which many persons in that state disgraced themselves and

brought reproach upon the Christian name, the labors of that society were suspended for a season.

"In the fall of 1841, I removed from Providence to this city; but, on the 'cessation of *deadly hostilities*,' I was invited back to take charge of the Second Society, which, from the social upheaving of affairs, had come to be composed of about an equal share of the two societies. I visited the city and preached several times, and found good friends among all my acquaintances, with very few exceptions, and saw no cause to prevent the success of the two societies, under judicious management and good fellowship; but my relations were such here that I judged it inexpedient to leave for another settlement.

"Since that time,— on the settlement of your lamented brother there,— you have been quite as familiar with affairs as myself. The result has fully shown, I think, that all that is needed among a people as enlightened and liberal as in Providence, to secure abundant and permanent prosperity, is an active, faithful and united ministry. It may be safely laid down, as a rule, that the principal responsibility in building up a good society depends mainly upon the character of its preachers. The spirit of our age is eminently favorable to whatever is liberal, and the presentation of gospel truth in a proper manner, and backed by an efficient and circumspect ministry, cannot fail to win converts, and promote, in a high degree, the social and religious prosperity of any community. But along with this spirit of liberality there fortunately goes a conservative influence, which discriminates closely in the analysis of conduct, especially when compared with preaching; and he who teaches a truth is

rightly expected to adorn that truth by a corresponding manner of conduct. No one, therefore, need expect that a society will ever attain to any permanent prosperity with a false, quarrelsome, or rotten ministry. God will never allow it.

"I am, dear brother, fraternally thine,

"WM. S. BALCH."

Mr. Balch finding a wider field of usefulness open before him in the city of New York, as pastor of the Bleecker-street church, removed thither in October, 1841; and he has there, as elsewhere, shown himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.

The Rev. Henry Bacon succeeded Mr. Balch in the pastoral care of the First Society in Providence, entering upon his duties there in March, 1842.

It is scarcely necessary to say that this was, indeed, a day of peril for new enterprises, in society matters, in the State of Rhode Island. Nearly every parish in the state was more or less agitated by the all-absorbing political questions of the times, and some of them were irrecoverably ruined by this agitation. Mr. Bacon, by the native sympathies of his heart, was attracted to the law-and-order party in the state, and thus found himself very innocently, but practically, condemning the course of his predecessor, and thereby rendering himself quite obnoxious to the hostility of the personal and political friends of Mr. Balch. With characteristic *independence*, he animadverted upon the conduct of political preachers, and in an unguarded moment, it is said, he went so far as to ratify the sentence passed by the tribunals of the

state upon the leading man of the suffrage party — a sentence which doomed a noble-hearted citizen, *for alleged treason*, to confinement within the walls of a prison, and to a companionship with the most noted criminals of the state. He bore his wrongs with a heroic spirit, but his physical energies yielded to his confinement, and he is now a confirmed invalid.

Of course, the labors of Mr. Bacon, however faithfully and conscientiously performed, were not acceptable to those who sympathized with this man, and the party which he represented. This class among his hearers very soon proposed a change of pastors, as an expedient best calculated to promote the harmony of the society and the interests of the cause of liberal Christianity. This proposition, however, was not acceded to by the friends of Mr. Bacon, and no alternative was left to the minority, but to conquer their prejudices and remain, or withdraw and reörganize the Second Society. The latter expedient they finally adopted.

It forms no part of my plan to discuss the merits of this political struggle in these pages. But it may be remarked, in extenuation of the course pursued by Mr. Balch and Mr. Bacon, respectively, that it was doubtless true to the idiosyncrasy of each. Neither had power, under the pressure of circumstances which surrounded him, to conceal his sentiments; and, therefore, very naturally, and perhaps we should say very innocently, offended opposing tastes. And common charity suggests that we "think no evil" of their motives.

In a community like ours, men of common sympathies on the subject of religion may differ very widely on po-

litical questions. And, as their sympathy on religious, and not political matters, is the basis of their church and society relations, they should charitably bear with differences of opinion on other and less important subjects, that Christ be not wounded in the house of his friends. Liberty of speech, and fidelity to conscience, are the glory and the boast of all parties. Each, claiming the boon for itself, should accord it to all others. And, if the pastor of a society composed of such tolerant spirits, true to his own convictions, occasionally expresses a sentiment, or proclaims a doctrine, not specially trimmed to the personal prejudices of his charge, instead of charging him with an unpardonable fault in his ministrations, they will respect him for his independence, and listen with deference to his lessons, that they may learn. No considerable number of any society should look to its pastor for a mere reflection of their own peculiarities of thought and prejudice, as they would look into a mirror for an exact reflection of their forms and features. If they are fortunate enough to discover in his utterances the mind of Christ, and the spirit of Christ, they should esteem it a duty, as well as a privilege, to review the sentiments or prejudices in their own heart which these utterances condemn; and, instead of denouncing his efforts as a needless interference with the private opinions of his charge, and a wide departure from the legitimate sphere of his official duties, they should, with one accord, encourage such proofs of his fidelity to their own spiritual interests. And it is gratifying to know that societies in our denomination are beginning to apprehend this duty. And hence, as a general rule, the minister that cherishes the spirit of his

Master, and aims to promote the highest good of humanity, though his measures may evince a want of prudence and foresight, will live in the affectionate remembrances of his people; while another, of more seeming discretion in his measures, yet wanting humility; ambitious of distinction in the kingdom; envious of co-workers, and jealous of his own charge; claiming the prerogative to control the preferences of his hearers, and to exclude from their affections the name of predecessor or associate, will sink into obscurity, in spite of talent, zeal, and high pretensions.

In reviewing the causes which contributed to the reörganization of the Second Universalist Society in Providence, the opposition to Mr. Bacon must, doubtless, be regarded as the most immediate and powerful. Whether this opposition was justified by the course which, he alleges, and we have no disposition to deny, he conscientiously pursued, is another question, and one which I am fortunately relieved from deciding.

CHAPTER XXII.

CALL TO PROVIDENCE.

THE friends of Universalism who, for reasons indicated in the preceding chapter, could no longer worship with the First Universalist Society in Providence, rallied in the summer of 1845, and formed the nucleus around which the present Second Universalist Society was gathered. After consultation with each other, and earnest inquiry as to the best course which existing circumstances rendered it most expedient for them to pursue, they finally decided to draw up *another* declaration of independence, and to circulate it for signatures and approval among liberal-minded men, whether professing to be Universalists or not. This declaration, forming the basis of a new and independent society, reads as follows:

"WE, the undersigned, believing that the time has arrived when the friends of true religious freedom and liberal sentiments, in this land of Roger Willians, should prove their attachment to the cause of truth, and their regard for the inestimable right of private judgment, by taking a bold and decided stand against intolerance and persecution of whatever kind: and believing, also, that our own moral and spiritual progress, and the diffusion among the community of correct and salutary religious

views, can be best promoted by associating ourselves into an Independent Religious Society, upon the broad and elevated platform of Christian equality, love, and goodwill to all men, where all may unite as brethren and friends in the spirit of mutual forbearance and forgiveness, do hereby severally agree, each with the other, to associate together in such capacity.

"And, believing, moreover, that Rev. Wm. S. Balch, from his sound Christian character, his clear, liberal and consistent views of religious truth and personal duty, his ardent and devoted attachment to free principles, and his fearless, manly and efficient opposition to bigotry and oppression, added to his intimate acquaintance with our peculiar condition and his generous sympathy with our wants, is eminently qualified to unite the now scattered and distracted friends of liberal views in this city into one fold; therefore, we hereby express our ardent desire that he be invited to become our pastor, and that Edward F. Miller, Hezekiah Willard, Sylvester R. Jackson, Albert Briggs, George E. Blake, Samuel Wesson, Alexander Lake, Thomas G. Howland, and Alfred Buffington, be a committee to make the necessary arrangements, and that they be fully authorized to carry out the objects herein contemplated."

This instrument was signed by one hundred and fifty men, most of whom were heads of families, and, with scarcely an exception, all occupying that position in society which is so freely accorded to honest, upright, and intelligent citizens.

The committee named in this instrument proceeded in a body to New York, waited upon Mr. Balch, explained

to him the condition of affairs in Providence — the hopes that animated his friends whom they represented, and the certainty of establishing a society containing within itself the elements of speedy growth and permanent prosperity; and urged him to accept the invitation which they were commissioned to present to him. Very liberal support was guaranteed, and every inducement which the committee could suggest, twas held out to insure his return to Providence. Not being prepared to give a definite answer to the committee, he encouraged their hearts with a promise to visit the city, to preach a few Sabbaths, and to advise with them in regard to the future. In redeeming this promise, he found that his presence among his friends was hailed with demonstrations of delight, and his message was listened to with unwonted enthusiasm.

On his return to New York, and after consulting with his charge there, he declined the invitation to Providence, and recommended to the confidence and affection of his friends the subject of this Memoir. This was after he had had consultation with the writer in regard to the qualifications of his brother as a preacher, and especially in regard to his qualifications for conducting an enterprise so peculiar in its character as the one that had just originated in Providence.

The committee charged with the service of inviting Mr. Balch say, in their report to the society, December 30, 1845:

"For some time we had reason to believe that Bro. Balch would accept our invitation. The society has already been apprized, however, that he declined on ac-

count of the obligations which he felt that he owed to the society over which he *was* then, and still *is*, settled.

"Immediately after this event, we were presented with an opportunity of hearing Bro. James M. Cook preach, and, believing, from the proof which he gave us of his ability to dispense religious truth, that he was well qualified to lead us in religious worship, and guide us in Christian duty, the society instructed the committee to invite him to become their pastor.

"Accordingly, a formal call was extended to Mr. Cook, and the committee are happy to state that he accepted the invitation, and has already commenced his labors among us in that capacity.

* * * * * * *

"Your committee cannot close this report, which is to terminate their labors, without congratulating the society upon the favorable auspices under which their enterprise has been commenced; nor refrain from expressing an ardent hope that, by the blessing of God upon our efforts, it may result in the extension of liberal principles and the promotion of genuine piety."

Previous to the call of Mr. Cook, the new organization, with the consent of all its members, had dropped the name of Independent Religious Society, and adopted one more expressive of its aims and ultimate purposes, namely: THE SECOND UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF PROVIDENCE, R. I.

On Mr. Cook's first appearance in Providence, he found the audience assembled on the Sabbath very large, and very enthusiastic in the hope of success. The new enterprise was destined to be popular among a class that

had the ability and the disposition to carry it forward. This was seen at once, and hence no doubts were to be struggled with, and no days of *uncertainty*, to weary the spirits of those engaged in it, preceded the visions of glory which cheered them through all their troubles. The time and the man had come, and both were greeted as expressions of divine approval by the multitude that gathered to hear his first message in the city of Providence. Mr. Balch was remembered for his labors of love among them; but, in procuring the services of Mr. Cook for the multitude that had rallied around his name, he had awakened a degree of confidence in his devotion to their interest, and of respect for his judgment, which must have been very gratifying to his feelings. They now accorded to him superior foresight in declining their invitation, and in sending them a man against whom there was no personal prejudice in the city to overcome.

It is sufficient to add here, what has been already indicated in the report of the committee, that the society, after hearing Mr. Cook two Sabbaths, extended to him a very cordial and perfectly unanimous invitation to accept its pastorship, and to commence his labors at the earliest possible moment.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SOCIETY IN PROVIDENCE.

The removal of Mr. Cook from New York to New England — from the country to the city — marks a distinct era in his life. It therefore deserves particular notice.

Hitherto his ministry, for the most part, had been confined to small country villages in his native state. Commencing with Chili, he found there a few generous souls who had come to cherish the hope which points to the ultimate triumphs of grace in the divine government, but who had, beyond the suggestions of this hope, little conception of Universalism as a system of religious faith and practice. It was his, therefore, to begin with the inculcation of "the principles of the doctrine of Christ;" and he remained there long enough to see the great importance of so applying these principles as to awaken in the hearts of his hearers aspirations for a diviner life, to develop their moral and religious energies, and direct them to the diffusion of truth and the promotion of righteousness.

In Churchville there were the fragments of a society organized before he was born. Its members were scattered; if it still retained its connection with "the true

Vine," to all human appearance it was withered and dead. In Fairport and Victor he was more fortunate. Here were organized societies, each owning a meeting-house. And these societies were composed of persons standing high in the public estimation; persons many of whom, at least, were well instructed in the principles of the Gospel, as understood by Universalists. They loved their Bibles, loved the truth, loved Universalism. And hence, as in most rural districts, they regarded the ornaments of style far less than they did the *substance* of a discourse. They were satisfied only with sound doctrine, based upon the promises of God in Christ Jesus; and if presented them in a homely garb, dazzling in none of "the wisdom of words," they loved it none the less, and could love it no more.

But on removing to Providence a very different field of labor was open before him. The seat of one of the most distinguished literary institutions in the country, and blest with a ministry of educated minds, it presented claims for literary attainments which he had hitherto found little time to consider. The pastor of the First Society also, with whom he was to measure swords in the great warfare for truth, had already earned the reputation of a ready writer and an eloquent preacher; a circumstance of itself sufficient to incite him to a more careful preparation for his pulpit services. But, as will be seen, the multiplicity of his engagements in society matters left him but little time for study.

This is not all. The society in Providence was very different from any to which he had ministered. And, indeed, we hazard little in saying that there was none in

the whole denomination bearing any very striking resemblance to it. Its constituents were most remarkable. Many of them were Universalists,—not all. Common sympathies made them dear to each other, and yet no common faith in Christ united them as a whole. With few exceptions, they were *religiously* opposed to the dominant party in state politics; absolute haters of what they familiarly termed the Algerine policy. They longed to see it abolished. It was ill-suited to the times, and every sentiment of their hearts was opposed to it. They were not fanatics. They were men of sterling integrity; judicious and prudent, yet quite hopeful of a "better time coming." Many of them, as already intimated, were well instructed in the Gospel, and drew from its principles of fraternity and equality a sanction of their political creed. Others thought they discovered in Universalism something analogous to democracy, and, though not familiar with its scriptural basis, were willing to unite with its votaries for the diffusion of its principles, thus paving the way for political reforms. Still another, and a very large class, composing this society, in connecting themselves with it, sought religious improvement alone. Alienated from the altar at which they had hitherto worshipped, they were anxious only to erect another which they could call their own.

It will readily be seen that a congregation so heterogeneous in its elements, coming together without any strong religious affinities, and actuated by widely different motives, must needs be influenced by a powerful mind, in order that harmony of action between the different portions may be promoted, and the whole speedily

engaged in those works which evince the ascendency of religious aspirations. And yet this was accomplished. All classes became so deeply interested in the labors of their young pastor,— so quickened by the unction of his eloquence, so fired with his enthusiasm in behalf of the doctrines of Christ, and so permeated with his zeal,— that they were willing to forget the motives which originally brought them together, and, in the unity of spirit and the bonds of peace, to strive together for the faith of the Gospel.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LABORS IN PROVIDENCE.

According to arrangements previously made, Mr. Cook entered upon his duties as pastor of the Second Universalist Society in Providence the last Sunday in November, 1845. Delayed in getting his release from Fairport and Victor beyond the time he had hoped to secure it, his friends in Providence had become very impatient for his arrival; and, as he appeared in the desk for the first time, a crowded audience was before him, and in every countenance beamed an expression of joy,—the realization of hopes deferred. His discourse was one of great power, and was listened to with profound attention. It was a masterly exposition of the principles of the Gospel, and of the course which he intended to pursue for the diffusion of these principles in his new field of labor.

His words fell upon the hearts of his hearers as a refreshing shower upon the parched ground. They retired full of hope, and fired with an enthusiasm which uttered itself in their every word and action. The hour of their triumph had come, and they were prepared by past trials to enjoy it to excess. Much was to be excused to circumstances, and we may not, therefore, too

severely censure, though the youthful pastor and his delighted charge permitted a glorious future, undimmed with shadows, kindling the brightest anticipations, to engross all their thoughts, and too early to dispel all their fears. *There is no path on earth so bright but darkness may gather about it at times*, is the constant lesson of prudence,—a lesson, however, not overmuch regarded at this particular period by pastor or people.

In a letter dated Dec. 24, 1845, he says:

"BRO. WILLIAM: I have but a moment to write this morning, and have concluded to devote that moment to you and mother.

"You will see, by the date of this, that I am in Providence. I have been here something over a month. My meetings are increasing very rapidly, and, if they continue to increase in future as they have increased since my arrival here, no hall in this city will be sufficient to contain the congregation. Last Sabbath we had a multitude to hear; our hall, seating over six hundred, was crowded to excess — entry, aisles, platform and all; and then many went away unable to obtain admission. The excitement is too great for so short a time; but I am determined that, with God's blessing, it shall be made to subserve his cause."

In this purpose of his heart he was not doomed to disappointment. The pleasure of the Lord continued to prosper in his hands, and through his instrumentality many were brought from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God. He continues:

"I have rented a very neat cottage-house for one hundred and twelve dollars per annum." This house was situated on Pine-street, in the neighborhood of several devoted friends of the society, and after some improvements was sufficiently capacious for the accommodation of his small family. The few articles of furniture which he brought with him from the West were speedily arranged by friendly hands, and with little care to himself or family. To these were added others,— some by purchase, and some by the donations of friends,— till enough were accumulated, and he soon felt himself comfortably settled in his new home. The members of his congregation spared no pains to make him feel that he was among friends, and thus to reconcile him to the change in his ministerial relations, which, but a few weeks before, had cost him such a sacrifice of feeling. Nor did their efforts, directed to this end, prove unavailing. In the letter quoted above, he says: "The people here are very warm-hearted and friendly; and, I think, after all, in coming here I have made a good move."

Few know the conflicting sentiments — hopes and fears — that agitate the mind of a Christian pastor, as he is about to resign a charge dear to him as the apple of his eye, and to enter upon a new field of labor. It is resigning a certainty for an uncertainty. It is giving up the communion and sympathy of *friends*, tried and found faithful, for the *prospect* of friends yet to be tested. And happy, indeed, is the man who can so soon settle his misgivings, and say, "*I think I have made a good move.*"

His meetings were held in Mechanics' Hall, situated at the corner of Westminster-street and Washington-row.

Access to it was gained from Washington-row by a winding and not very convenient staircase. By this same entrance some dozen offices in the building were reached. Among these was one printing-office, which was usually open to a very late hour Saturday nights, and it was therefore impossible to make such preparations for the Sabbath as religious congregations usually desire.

But the entrance to the hall was but one of many inconveniences pertaining to it. When reached by this offensive thoroughfare, it was far from being desirable as a place of worship. It was objectionable on account of the cross lights; the ceiling was too low for purposes of ventilation, and the air, vitiated as it sometimes was by nearly a thousand breaths, was injurious to the hearers, and exceedingly deleterious in its effects upon the whole nervous system, and especially the lungs, of the speaker. Few men could have endured the labor which Mr. Cook performed in this hall.

And then there were associations connected with the place not a little offensive to those who are wont to connect with the altar of worship *a house sacred to the Lord.* During the week it was used for almost every conceivable purpose to which such halls are put, for the sake of gain. It was used for exhibitions of various kinds,—for concerts, not always "*sacred;*" for caricaturing the lower types of humanity, for the merry dance and for the social festival. Consequently, few resorted there on the Sabbath from any feelings of reverence or even respect for the place, which may be supposed to be entertained for the sanctuary hallowed by a thousand memories of childhood and of maturer years; and which

often induce attendance upon public worship, when the manner of the preacher and the substance of his discourse would fail to secure a hearing ear. How many dull sermons and spiritless prayers are borne with and charitably regarded by hearers influenced by these sentiments,— sermons and prayers which of themselves would repel less devout minds! But Mechanics' Hall had no such attractive associations for the devout heart. On the contrary, the young pastor, laboring in this most *unspiritual* place to gather and maintain a religious society, was obliged to contend with prejudices against it,— prejudices induced by sentiments which it is the true interest of every religious teacher to cherish in the hearts of his hearers.

But, despite all these disadvantages, there were doubtless some benefits accruing to the society from the place in which its first meetings were held. There was at that time in Providence (as there usually is in all cities) a large class of persons standing aloof from all existing organizations of Christians; so far as the church is concerned, a sort of floating population. Though *apparently* sceptical in regard to the utility of religious societies, and sometimes apparently fond of displaying their scepticism, they are *really* only waiting for some new impulse to arouse them to a sense of duty, and to engage them in the service of Christ. Among these may often be found strong minds and generous hearts. They naturally shrink from an approach to old established organizations, in which, if they would mingle, they must first consent to sacrifice their own individuality, and then conform to customs not their own,— customs, indeed,

which bear no impress of their own minds. But let a new society be proposed,— let its first meetings be held in a public hall, in a place where all classes are accustomed to resort, a place which is sacred to no particular forms, or customs, or habits of thought, and where each may leave his mark on the character of the society about to be formed,— and the proposal is almost sure to arrest the attention of the class we have described. In their hearts a powerful spring of action is touched, and they are the first to enter this new field of enterprise.

Such was the case in the effort to establish the Second Universalist Society in Providence. Men that for years had been indifferent to all religious societies readily responded to the call for this organization; and, finding in the unreserved intercourse of those who gathered in that unsanctified place of worship, many congenial spirits, became prominent in giving direction to its affairs.

It was no fault of Mr. Cook that *a second Universalist society* was organized in Providence some five years before he visited the city. It was no fault of his that faithful brethren, such as Rev. J. N. Parker, W. S. Ballou, and James Gallager, had ministered to it, and earnestly sought to establish it on a sure foundation. He might, however, have judged, from the *sympathy* which these brethren received from the successor of Mr. Balch, that he had little to hope from *his* coöperation. Mr. Ballou, for the sake of peace, abandoned the undertaking. Mr. Gallager was duly notified, on his arrival in the city, that to attempt anything in behalf of the Second Society, any effort to revive it, would meet

with no encouragement at the hands of the pastor of the First Society. He, however, made an effort; gathered around him many devoted friends, and remained long enough to realize the evils which his first *brotherly greeting* portended. Finding himself the victim of a prejudice which he despaired of overcoming, he, too, retired, leaving the whole field to *one* who seemed to covet it so much.

But now a new society had sprung up, and, unfortunately, it bore the name that had become obnoxious to this watchful brother. It was *the Second Society*. It must, therefore, be treated as its namesake had been treated before. If it made choice of a pastor, he must not be recognized as a brother, a co-worker in the Lord, but as a rival, an enemy. As such he must be treated. Thus he felt, or said he felt, before it was known who was to be called to the pastorship of the new society.

On coming to the city, Mr. Cook entertained the highest regard for this brother. Familiar with his writings, he felt measurably acquainted with the man. Having preached through the day to the Second Society, he proposed to some of the friends to go into the meeting of the First Society in the evening. They went. He listened with great interest to the services. They closed, and he stepped forward, extended his hand to the officiating clergyman as he descended from the desk, gave his name, and thus introduced himself. In this disregard of ceremony, Mr. Cook might have pleaded the custom among ministers (who are supposed to be brethren) in the region of his former labors; or his own rustic manners; or, more forcibly, the fact that those who accompanied him to the

meeting were regarded by the brother as his personal enemies, and he did not desire to subject him to the mortification of being introduced to a *friend* by one of these. But, whatever justification the act might claim, it proved to be a most unfortunate affair. How could he have been guilty of it? It offended the pastor of the First Society, and he immediately turned away from the presumptuous intruder, and left him the observed of all observers, to meditate upon his unpardonable temerity — *alone in the midst!*

These brethren met the next day. A conversation was had, which served only to confirm the alienation which this unexpected and very extraordinary repulse had so clearly foreshadowed; and they separated, fully convinced that there could be but little sympathy between them, to make a residence in the same city agreeable.

On commencing his labors in Providence as pastor, his heart was burdened with the conviction that he must encounter not only the ordinary obstacles in the way of establishing a new society, but the enmity of a brother, whose coöperation should have served to lighten his toils, and strengthen his hands for the work before him.

On the 22d January, 1846, at the request of the society, an installing council assembled at the house of S. R. Jackson, Esq., for the purpose of taking measures to consummate the pastoral relation between Mr. Cook and the Second Universalist Society of Providence. This council was organized by the choice of Rev. Hosea Ballou, of Boston, as moderator, and Albert Briggs, of Providence, as clerk.

After the usual forms of such councils had been ob-

served, the following order of services was, at the request of the society, unanimously adopted:

1. Reading of the Scriptures, by Rev. H. Bacon, of Providence.

2. Introductory Prayer, by Rev. J. Boyden, jun., of Woonsocket.

3. Sermon, by Rev. Hosea Ballou, of Boston.

4. Installing Prayer, by Rev. H. Bacon.

5. Charge and Delivery of Scriptures, by Rev. S. Streeter, of Boston.

6. Right Hand of Fellowship, by Rev. J. Boyden.

7. Address to Society, by Rev. T. D. Cook, of Boston.

8. Benediction, by the Pastor.

All these services, so far as I am permitted to speak of them, were of a most impressive character, and eminently calculated to engage the attention of Universalists in the city of Providence, and to make them feel the importance of *striving together for* the faith of the Gospel. They were held in the church of the First Society. Both societies were largely represented in the audience; the pastors were together in the desk; and it was hoped by many that the communions of this occasion, *sanctified by one of the most impressive installing prayers I ever heard*, would be followed by a generous sympathy between all who participated in them; and that, henceforth, angels and men would be permitted to gaze on that heaven-commended sight — *brethren dwelling together in unity*.

In the evening a conference-meeting was held, and the desire that the result promised by the day's services should speedily be realized seemed to actuate all the speakers,

especially the venerable Hosea Ballou, who selected the 133d Psalm as the topic of his remarks, and from it spoke with a degree of earnest solicitude for the future welfare of the two societies, and for the harmonious action of their respective pastors, which produced the most profound and grateful sensation. Tears, in every part of the house, attested the power of his appeal; and every heart, for the moment at least, seemed to respond to the Christian sentiments which he uttered. And it is but the dictate of charity to suppose that all left that meeting suppliants at the mercy-seat, earnestly desiring grace sufficient to heed the word spoken.

Mr. Cook had already commenced his winter operations for the enlightenment of those who flocked to hear him preach. He found that many who united in calling him to Providence, as well as casual hearers, needed instruction in the very principles of the Gospel of Christ. The simple fact that Universalism recognizes the brotherhood of man, and approves the doctrine that all men are "*created free and equal*," was sufficient to commend it to many hearts. But some of these had yet to learn that Universalism is a Bible truth. As a form of doctrine, it struck their fancy. It was beautiful to gaze upon. But whether it was sound at heart; whether the form represented the Spirit which animated it; whether the beautiful exterior, which awakened their admiration, was but an expression of its inner life, or otherwise, were questions which they felt called upon now to decide. They had been *taught* to regard it as a delusion, and such a delusion as the carnal heart fondly, naturally, accepts. Though it might *seem* to them a child of heaven, it was in

reality nothing less, nor more, than Satan transformed into an angel of light. And the influence of this kind of teaching was still present with them, and they felt, at times, that they were really in danger of lavishing their affections (which they could no longer control) upon a beauty whose *charm was death, and whose house was the way to hell!*

Many of his hearers were, therefore, prepared for the course of labors which he early announced for his first winter in Providence. Especially was this the case with those who were seeking for light to change their *fancy* for Universalism into *faith* in its principles, and further to assure them that it was of God.

In almost every discourse which he preached this winter, he took occasion to unveil the workings and results of a false education in matters of theology; the doubts and painful apprehensions which it suggests to the mind, and to answer the objections which it arrays against the truth. He assaulted the strongholds of error with a master spirit. He explained the Scriptures alleged in support of a limited salvation, and indicated their harmony with the great and exceedingly precious promises of God — promises which point to the ultimate triumph of goodness in the moral world. Among those most deeply interested in his labors were some who had been strongly tempted to avow their hostility to the Bible. Taught in childhood to believe that endless misery is one of its fundamental doctrines, and never having outgrown this false impression, yet satisfied that the doctrine itself is a base reflection upon the divine character and government, they had come to feel that it was *infidel* to God

to acknowledge their fidelity to his reputed word. Another class evinced a like strong interest in his labors. These had never come to doubt the authenticity of the Bible, as a divine revelation; and, though their own hearts condemned the dogma to which we have alluded, they feared that it might be true — half believed that it was taught by holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the spirit of God. These longed for assurances that the *Lamb of God shall ultimately take away the sins of the world.* He encouraged both these classes to state to him their most serious objections to the system of faith which he cherished, and to the Bible which he defended. He was willing to preach from any text of Scripture which had engaged their attention and staggered their faith. They took him at his word — sent in text after text, which he received, read from the desk, announced the time when they would be considered, and urged all honest inquirers after truth to hear their exposition. And, at the appointed time, crowds usually flocked to listen.

Few men are better qualified for this kind of labor than was Mr. Cook. Indeed, I doubt whether our denomination has ever been favored with the services of many who could be regarded as his equals. It has been blessed with many more learned, more logical, more eloquent, and more gifted in intellect. But few have possessed greater power of adapting their communications to the various wants of inquirers struggling for deliverance from the errors of the church than he. His habits of controversy, formed when but a boy, and confirmed by the whole course of his ministry, had made him familiar with

every form of objection to Universalism which could be stated by the logical mind. His experience had qualified him to enter into and sympathize with all the doubts and fears of the heart tortured with the apprehensions of unending woe, or annihilation. And hence his labors were peculiarly grateful to inquirers. Entering so fully into their feelings, delineating the doubts with which they struggled, and encouraging their aspirations for a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, they felt an extraordinary degree of confidence while trusting themselves to his guidance; believing that, as he had himself suffered, he must know how to succor those in doubt, and still desiring to know Jesus as the Saviour of the world.

His manner of discoursing on a controverted text was simple. His great object was to present its true meaning to the hearer in words easily understood. He usually began with a few remarks on the importance of divesting the mind of prejudice, and coming to the investigation of the subject before them with hearts and minds prepared to receive the truth. This was followed by a fair and candid statement of the common orthodox interpretation of the text. To this was usually added reasons for this interpretation. In giving these he presented the very strongest objections to the interpretation which he was about to give that the text could be made to suggest. And I have heard his hearers remark, that while listening to his presentation of these objections (more forcible occasionally than any that had ever occurred to their own minds), they often trembled with apprehension for the fate of his theory. He invested their own early prejudices with new power. He gave

them a fresh influence over their hearts, which, bringing back the painful experiences of the past, excluded for the time the light of truth that had just begun to illumine their souls; and they felt to reproach themselves for having so far departed from the popular dogmas of the church as to tamper at all with Universalism. But when he had concluded his array of objections to the doctrines he taught, which his text might be supposed to furnish, and began to concentrate upon these objections the light streaming from the general tenor of the Divine Word, from the perfections of the Deity, from the mission, character, death and resurrection of Christ, and, finally, from the text and its connection, they felt their doubts of Universalism, and all their misgivings, gradually fading away before the increasing effulgence; their hopes reässured, their faith strengthened, and themselves involuntarily exclaiming, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

This course of preaching seemed at the time to meet a public demand in the city of Providence, and it consequently attracted large audiences. The excitement to which he alludes, in the letter already quoted, was one of its results. Seldom did he preach *on any controverted text* of Scripture to less than four hundred persons, and more often eight hundred were present.

Providence is the seat of two Unitarian societies. Both are large and wealthy. The pastor of the First Unitarian Society (known as the First Congregational Society) is the Rev. E. B. Hall, D.D. He is a man justly esteemed for his learning and his piety, his eloquence as a preacher, and his virtues as a man. He is familiar

with the Unitarian system of faith, and competent to give to inquirers such information as they may desire for a proper understanding of its principles. He is much of a gentleman withal — just such a person, in a word, as one of Mr. Cook's peculiarities would be likely to address for information on doctrinal questions.

Soon after he removed to Providence, he was introduced to Dr. Hall, and, won by his gentlemanly bearing, he was encouraged to address him a friendly letter, in which he proposed three distinct inquiries, relating to points in controversy between Universalists and those who limit the grace and salvation of God. On these points he sincerely desired information.

It may be remarked here that up to this time he had enjoyed very little personal intercourse with Unitarians. In western New York this body of Christians had made little progress in establishing societies. A few of the cities had furnished materials for such societies; but in the region of his labors scarcely anything in the way of organized effort had been accomplished. His attention had not, therefore, been specially directed to the peculiarities of this faith. He understood the doctrine of the divine unity as the great central idea of their system. The writings of Channing he had read and admired as the effusions of a gifted mind and a devout heart; but he found that even he was quite indefinite on some prominent doctrines which had claimed the attention of the theological world; especially so concerning the final destiny of man. He now found himself in a community where Unitarianism was accepted by many of the best-developed minds, and was consequently invested with a

potent influence. He desired, therefore, to understand it; to know what it taught concerning the *atonement made by Christ, the judgment of the world, and the final destiny of the race.* He consequently addressed a letter to Dr. Hall, under date of February 20, 1846, in the following words:

"Rev. Dr. Hall.

Dear Sir: Having a desire to know distinctly whether the Unitarian denomination generally, and you particularly, believe in the doctrines of Vicarious Atonement and Endless Punishment, I have taken the liberty to address you the * * * following inquiries:

"First, Do you believe that the Scriptures teach the doctrine of Vicarious Atonement?

"Secondly, Do you believe that those whose sins are not pardoned, and whose punishment is not forgiven in this life, will be doomed to suffer ENDLESS PUNISHMENT in the life to come?

"Finally, Do you believe that the Bible teaches that there will be a judgment after the resurrection of the dead, in which each individual of the human family will be judged and rewarded according to his moral character here?

"I have long had a desire to understand, in a definite manner, whether these doctrines were believed and taught by your denomination, or not. And, having full confidence in your learning, and ability to impart any information that may be sought concerning your faith, I have felt the more liberty in addressing you the above inquiries." * * * * * *

To these inquiries Dr. Hall, on the 24th of February, returned the following answer:

"DEAR SIR: Your letter requires no apology. I am always willing to be asked and to answer any question in my power, especially when I believe the inquirer honest and in earnest. But your questions could be answered more easily and fully in conversation; and I shall be very glad to see you at my house, or to call upon you when I am able. At present, I can give but a brief answer to each interrogatory.

"1. No Unitarians, to my knowledge, believe in Vicarious Atonement, in the Calvinistic and usual meaning of the words. We read in the Scriptures, and we believe, that Christ died *for* the sinner, but not *instead* of the sinner. He died for his impression, instruction, and conversion, and through these his salvation. 'He died the just FOR the unjust, to bring us to God;' that is, to lead us to him in repentance, obedience, and love. If he died instead of the sinner (vicariously), then would not the sinner die. If he suffered the whole penalty and discharged the whole debt, then should we have nothing to pay or to suffer. And this, I believe, was the reasoning and the origin of the old doctrine of extreme Universalism, a doctrine which, I candidly own, seems to me to have as little foundation in Scripture or reason as the opposite extreme.

"2. And this may intimate my reply to your other two questions, as to judgment and punishment. The Scripture says, 'After death, the judgment;' I believe it. The Scripture says, 'God will render to every man according to his deeds,' etc.; I believe it. All Unitarians

believe in a judgment to come, a future retribution. They believe it follows death immediately, and is strict, impartial, just, both in measure and mercy, to every man, according to character; — to the good, a happiness now inconceivable; *to the wicked, terrible misery.* We believe this misery will be a natural and necessary consequence of conduct and character, not an arbitrary, revengeful infliction. Of its duration we know nothing, and seldom speak, not feeling ourselves authorized to speak confidently. We do not find in Scripture absolute proof of 'endless' punishment, and we recoil from it with horror as commonly presented; yet in the letter of Scripture we find more that implies it than no punishment. We do not find any proof of instant and universal happiness after death, nor yet *sufficient* evidence of the final restoration of the wicked to lead us to preach it, or confidently believe it. We hope it, and should infer it from the character of God and the purpose of punishment. But we see not that it is expressly taught; and we know not why, if a man has perfect freedom hereafter, he may not abuse that freedom forever. And we are very sure that the *effect* of a long life in sin may be eternal, at least in the destruction of so much capacity for good, and the loss of so much time and progress. So we content ourselves with preaching earnestly and solemnly, 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'

"I have written a tract on Atonement; and I have other tracts on almost every subject, which I will freely give, to show our faith more fully. * * * *

"With best wishes for your happiness,

"I am yours, truly, E. B. HALL."

This reply was far from being satisfactory to Mr. Cook. On the question relating to the atonement of Christ, the doctor seems to be quite explicit. He does not believe in vicarious atonement in the Calvinistic and usual sense of the words; but "believes that Christ died *for* the sinner,— that is, for his impression, instruction, and conversion, and through these his salvation."

The question naturally arose in Mr. Cook's mind, to what extent will the death of Christ be made efficacious in impressing, instructing, converting, and saving, sinners? Are none but believers to share the benefits of his death? Alas! how few will ever know that "He tasted death for every man"!

The other two questions are still more indefinitely answered. Dr. Hall does not confess his belief in a judgment at the resurrection of the dead such as Orthodoxy contends for; nor does he deny it. He simply refers to a passage of Scripture which, we think, contains no allusion to the natural death of any man, but to the typical death of the High Priest under the law; and, quoting it in its common, *corrupted* form, "*after death* the judgment," he quietly says, "I believe it." Believe what? — the Scripture? In this he only stands on a common level with the inquirer, and this the latter most sensibly felt.

In regard to *endless* punishment, he was left entirely in the dark. He was informed that Unitarians were disposed to recoil from this doctrine as commonly presented, and yet to believe that it was implied in the letter of the Scripture. The character of God and the purposes of punishment stand opposed to it; yet there is more in the

Bible to sanction it than to inspire the hope of universal restoration. Thus, Unitarianism seems to array the Bible against the character of God, and against the only enlightened philosophy of punishment.

So unsatisfactory was this communication, and so little light did it throw upon the subject of his inquiries, that he hesitated long about making any reply to it. He turned from Dr. Hall to the controversial writings of Unitarians. He studied these, talked often with the writer, talked with others, but he never ascertained the precise ground occupied by the votaries of this system in relation to the final destiny of the intelligent creation. He found, in the broad and liberal principles running, as a golden chain, through all their writings, a generous repudiation of the Calvinistic dogma of endless misery. Few, if any, were willing to acknowledge their faith in *retributive* punishments; holding that all the inflictions of the divine hand are remedial in their purposes, and intended to yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. And in all their vindications of the divine character from the aspersions of Calvinism, in their utterances concerning the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of the human race, concerning the dignity of the human soul, its capacities for immortal progress, and the provisions made for its salvation from sin, and its restoration to the image of its divine author,— in all their utterances on these most deeply-interesting topics, he found convincing and weighty reasons for believing that in their hearts they held the doctrine of universal salvation. And yet, when he found any direct reference to the subject of his inquiry, the destiny of the race, especially of those who

had not *here* accepted Christ and entered into rest, he observed that such reference was almost invariably couched in the stereotyped phrases of Orthodoxy, and furnished no hope of the ultimate salvation of any but saints. So, with this system before him, he was ready to infer from its *principles* the ultimate triumph of goodness and grace in the moral universe as one of its most obvious doctrines, and from its own declared deductions the perpetuity of evil as certain; and for months he pondered this mystery. At length, in August following, he prepared another note to Dr. Hall, in which he explained more fully his difficulties in regard to Unitarianism, and earnestly entreated him to be more explicit (than he was) in his reply to the inquiries he had already proposed. Whether this note was forwarded to Dr. Hall or not, I have no means of knowing. The draft of it seems to be left in an unfinished state, and, as I find no reply to it among his papers, I am inclined to the opinion that it was never sent. It shows, however, the effect of Dr. Hall's letter upon his mind, and, at the same time, evinces the earnestness with which he pursued the information he sought concerning that system of faith with which he had hoped to find himself in sympathy and fellowship.

But he was doomed to disappointment; and from this time forward he most painfully felt a want of confidence in the integrity of Unitarians. He was doubtless uncharitable, but he honestly believed that they were so far swayed by *policy* that, to avoid any seeming approximation to Universalism, they would remain *willingly ignorant* of those Scriptures which indicate the final destiny of the human soul. He thought he discerned in their

treatment of this subject, a fear of definite conclusions. "Darkness rather than light." In doubt, they were able to profess *some* sympathy with the Orthodox notions concerning the terrors of hell, and some with the Universalist opinions respecting the remedial design of punishment. Struggling for popular favor, they could the more readily adapt themselves to conflicting prejudices, and thus become all things to all men, if, under the shadow of a cherished or a necessary doubt, they could conscientiously say, "*Our* minds are not made up on this point. We are willing to leave it where the Scriptures leave it. We *doubt* Orthodoxy, and *want* faith in Universalism."

Under date of January 16, 1846, he writes to a friend in Chili, as follows:

"We are in Providence. This is a beautiful city, and contains about thirty-six thousand inhabitants. It is rapidly increasing in population. The people here are very social, and very cordial in their manners. They abound neither in *starch* nor in *aristocracy.* They seem more like the people of western New York than any I have ever found elsewhere."

This extract shows his appreciation of the people to whom he ministered. He was delighted with the simplicity of their manners; and their singular freedom from all aristocratic pretensions made them peculiarly dear to his heart. Through life he loved them. Though, in the great work to which he was called in this city, he found it necessary to entreat, exhort, and sometimes to rebuke them for a want of sympathy in his purposes; and, though such labors occasionally disturbed their mutual harmony, and in some instances cooled the ardor of their *first love*,

he loved them still, and often spoke of them to his more intimate friends as a "peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Early in the spring he called the attention of the society to the importance of organizing a Sabbath-school. This matter was urged with his usual energy, and on the first Sunday in April a school was duly organized. The number in attendance on this day was large; children were there to be taught, and parents and friends to serve the school as teachers. And, judging from the joy evinced on the opening of this school, we may reverently say, God was there with his blessing. Few Sunday-schools have ever started under more favorable circumstances, or with brighter prospects of success. Only a few months had passed away when the number of its pupils and teachers was greater than that of any other school in the city of Providence, and was considered quite equal to any in the Universalist denomination. Mr. Cook was always a great favorite in this school.

The excessive labors which he had performed, since his arrival in Providence, had considerably affected his health, and in the summer of 1846, following the advice of his physician, he repaired to Saratoga Springs for rest, hoping that in exemption from care and from labor, and in a judicious use of the waters, he might regain his usual health and spirits. From this place he writes to his family, July 22d, saying:

"I am not well, though, bating the fatigue of my journey, I am no worse than when I left home. This is some consolation. The physician here says my liver, left lung, and kidneys are somewhat affected, but assures

me that, by drinking the water a few days, and taking a *blue pill* now and then, I shall find speedy relief." He returned to his family about the first of August, considerably benefited by his journey.

In a letter to the writer, August 11, he says: "All things are going well in Providence; best of all, negotiations for peace between the two societies are in progress, and promise well. If successful, we think of having a grand excursion together, and on that occasion agreeing to treat each other as Christians and brethren of the same faith."

These peace negotiations seem to have originated in a very simple circumstance, and to have resulted in very little good. On the 21st of July, the Sabbath-school under Mr. Cook's pastoral charge called a meeting of the society to make arrangements for an excursion into the country. At this meeting it was voted to extend an invitation to the teachers, officers, and pastor of the school connected with the First Society, to join in the festivities of the occasion. It was believed that this courtesy would be duly appreciated, if it was not accepted, by those to whom it was offered; and that it might serve to cultivate more friendly relations between the two schools. And so it was. It was regarded by the First Society as a peace measure, and out of it grew the aforesaid negotiations. As was anticipated, these resulted, at last, in a grand excursion to what has since been known as *Union Grove*.

It was understood, on all hands, that on the day appointed for the excursion the two societies, with their pastors, were to come together in a spirit of mutual con-

cession; were to pledge themselves to forget the past, or only to remember it for the sake of its admonitions; were, as intimated on the occasion, to "bury the hatchet" and "smoke the pipe of peace;" and henceforth to live in the faithful discharge of those common courtesies which serve to cement the union of hearts cherishing the same religious faith. Ministering brethren were invited from abroad, to witness the grand consummation so devoutly desired, and came. The day appointed arrived. It dawned upon the world as the smile of God. The company was large; the leading men of both societies were present, and were untiring in their efforts to banish from the mind of the company all thoughts of past differences and dissensions, and to diffuse a genial and sympathetic spirit through all hearts. Nor were they unsuccessful in these efforts.

The day was wearing away pleasantly, and all seemed to enjoy it much. But the time for speech-making came — a critical time always, in the arrangement of past difficulties. The Rev. Dr. Ballou was introduced to those who had gathered to hear, and made a short address, very appropriate to the occasion, and thoroughly permeated with the spirit of reconciliation. The writer followed in a few congratulatory remarks, and the pastor of the First Society was announced. To the astonishment of his friends, he commenced with a sort of historical account of the difficulties which that day was to terminate; vindicated his own conduct throughout, and insinuated that if others had been actuated by his high purposes there had been no occasion for that day's reconciliation. Having discharged this duty to himself, he was willing to over-

look the past, to forgive all who had sought to injure him; and, as a proof of his sincerity, and his desire to live in *peace*, he concluded by extending "that right hand to Mr. Cook," desiring him to accept it as a pledge of future fellowship and coöperation. He was about to take his seat, but Mr. Cook still held him by the hand, and, without attempting to repel the insinuations to which he had so quietly listened, he responded to the fraternal sentiments just addressed to him, and concluded with a few general remarks breathing a spirit in harmony with the occasion.

From the moment that the pastor of the First Society uttered his first sentence, the aspect of the whole party was melancholy indeed. It seemed to send a chill through every heart. The hopes of the day, which had hitherto been so apparent in the joyous countenances of all, were suddenly blighted, and now, in an instant, as it were, gave place to unavailing regrets, and to sad forebodings of the future.

But the friends of Mr. Cook had occasion to bless God that he was not permitted to follow an example so eminently calculated to prevent the good they had hoped to achieve by that excursion; and that, under the most trying imputations, he was content to risk his own past conduct to the judgment of all present, without a word of apology or vindication.

It is sufficient to add that this union excursion did not result in any very striking exhibitions of the *unity of the spirit*, between the two societies, or their pastors. A correspondence followed between the latter — a correspondence which I have in my possession, and in which each attempts to justify himself, and to throw the blame

of the first estrangement, the defeat of the purposes of the union excursion, and the subsequent alienation, upon the other. Its publication might, perhaps, furnish a salutary lesson to brethren who *should* dwell together in unity; but it could do no good to the departed, and might possibly disturb the repose of the living.

In the conclusion of this year, we find Mr. Cook with a large Sabbath-school, engaged in preparing the pupils for their first public exhibition. This school now numbered about three hundred pupils and teachers, and in every department gave evidence of life and activity. It was rapidly extending its influence, and achieving for itself an enviable reputation throughout the city. Its approaching exhibition was, therefore, an event in which many had come to feel a profound interest. He felt deeply solicitous for the result. The church of the First Society had been engaged, and it would not do to have the exercises inferior, in the least, to those annually given in that house. It might lead the public to institute invidious comparisons between the two schools, and thus detract from the well-earned reputation of his own. No wonder, therefore, that this exhibition cost him no little anxiety, an immense amount of labor, and any number of somnambulic speculations.

But the appointed evening came, and he describes the result, in a letter to his brother, thus: "We are well, and *going ahead.* We had a Sabbath-school exhibition last week, at which we took one hundred and eight dollars, the price of admission being twelve and a half cents, and four hundred persons, including the school, were ad-

mitted free. It was called the best ever given in Providence. Thus we go. God bless us all! Amen."

Besides the account which this extract gives of the first exhibition of his Sabbath-school, it is valuable as a specimen of his epistolary correspondence. As such, it is peculiarly characteristic. He was always very concise, expressed his ideas in the most familiar terms, and generally in those terms which had *in them* most of the facts which he desired to communicate. He was always sparing of details, and of embellishments of all kinds common to most writers; but he seldom failed to make himself understood, or to disclose his distinct personality, in his letters.

On the 1st of October, 1846, a new instrumentality was brought to bear on the interests of the society — that is to say, a *Knitting Circle* was duly organized. This served to bring the society together under circumstances favorable to the cultivation of social intercourse between the members.

Knitting-circles, in connection with religious societies, so far as I am informed, are peculiar to Rhode Island. They had their origin in Providence, and may, therefore, claim a passing notice here. Like *sewing-circles*, they are organized by the choice of a president, vice-president, secretary, and a board of directors. The meetings are held weekly (and usually at the most commodious houses of the members), from October to April. At the adjournment of each meeting, the place of the next is announced. This announcement is repeated from the desk on the Sabbath, and the whole congregation, with such as each member thereof may feel inclined to invite, is en-

couraged to attend. Men, women and children, are therefore present. These meetings are sometimes very largely attended. Some are inclined to regard them as a sort of thermometer, by which the temperature of zeal in the society is indicated. The women in attendance knit, hear reports of the needy who may be known to any of the members, and devise means of relief. The men, after winding the yarn which they have contributed the means to purchase, gather in social circles, and freely diccuss matters pertaining to the interests of the religious society. If any prominent measure is to be carried, it usually undergoes a kind of formative process at the knitting-circle, before it is finally acted upon by a formal meeting of the society. "Women's rights" are duly recognized in these preliminary discussions, and the courtesy is rewarded by counsels which serve to modify action, and to insure the most favorable results. Those too young or too active for the confinement of knitting enliven the compæny with music and the merry laugh, and thus fulfil their mission by throwing an air of social delight over the whole circle.

At nine o'clock the knitting is laid aside, conversation ceases, the merry laugh is hushed, a hymn is sung, the divine blessing is invoked, and the company is prepared to separate, better acquainted with each other, and with the wants of the society, and, consequently, better prepared for their several duties, than when they met.

The meetings of the knitting-circle, organized about a year after Mr. Cook's removal to Providence, were attended, during his subsequent residence in the city, by from fifty to two hundred persons. His social qualities

made him a great favorite in these meetings, and he enjoyed them much. His benevolence was also gratified, because, in the results contemplated, he saw that the poor were to be provided for.

The winter of 1846–7 was, like the preceding winter, devoted to doctrinal instruction in the desk, for at least one half the weekly service. His meetings continued to be largely attended, and by many honest and earnest inquirers. During the week he was busy in extending the circle of his acquaintance in the community, and in his usual routine of calls, visits, weddings, and funerals, leaving but little time for systematic exercises in his study, and consequently adding but little to his literary attainments. Still, he was in one sense a student. He was a close observer of man and his motives. He studied the wants of society,—its religious wants,—and aimed to meet them, in his labors, to the extent of his ability. The inquirers that waited upon his ministry frequently met him in the street, the workshop, or the store, and often presented the objections to his faith which darkened their own minds, and invoked his aid in answering them. He felt called upon to be *ready always to give a reason of his hope*, and especially so during his first years in Providence. These objections suggested themes for his pulpit labors, and when he went into the desk he generally had some definite object to accomplish by his discourse; and, if it be admitted that he paid too little attention to the *style* of his sermons, it is nevertheless true that he seldom failed to meet the longings of some hearts that had, in familiar conversation, revealed to him their aspirations, their hopes, and their fears.

In March, 1847, he had a severe attack of erysipelas, which, turning upon his lungs, seemed, for a time, to threaten serious, if not fatal consequences. About the first of April, I was summoned to Providence to see him, but found, on my arrival, that his symptoms were more favorable, and that there was a fair prospect of his speedy recovery. I stayed with him over the Sabbath, preached to his people, and left him on Monday afternoon convalescent.

During this sickness, the Rev. Mr. Bacon visited him several times, and was very kind in his manner towards him.

A religious society brought together so suddenly as was the society of Mr. Cook, and numbering so many members, and these members actuated by such various motives, could hardly be supposed in a single year to reach that point of Christian attainment styled, by the apostle, *the unity of the spirit.* It will surprise no one, therefore, if we say that some who were quite zealous at first were already beginning to give signs of a waning interest. Liberality in the support of the society, pledged and boasted, had dwindled down into a most rigid economy; and, in some cases, mere *talk*, in quantity abundant, was all that was proffered to cancel plighted pecuniary obligations. These cases were not, however, numerous.

Then there were difficulties growing out of the date of the subscription, the want of a convenient place of worship, and the want of a suitable room for the meetings of the Sabbath-school association, the choir, and the Samaritan society.

Feeling that something must be done to check the growth of these evils, he resolved to step beyond the line of pastoral duties, and to address a sort of "executive message" to his trustees.

This communication was kindly received by the trustees, and in due time was laid before the society. According to its suggestions, a committee was appointed to make a vigorous effort to procure a suitable lot for a church. The same committee was also instructed to procure plans and estimates of a church edifice, and to report to the society at the earliest practicable moment.

Persons who have had little or no experience in the matter of laying the foundations of a religious society may, perhaps, regard the tone of such communications as *unministerial.* The subjects which are discussed in them belong (it will generally be conceded) to the trustees or prudential committee of a society, rather than to its pastor. But circumstances may demand their friendly coöperation; and if, through a distrust of their ability to discharge them, or indifference to the trust confided to them, committees neglect their obvious duties, then it is not only the privilege, but it becomes the imperative obligation of the pastor, to interpose his counsel to save the interests of the society. He must lead and encourage the doubting and the indifferent. If competent, he must devise and aid in executing plans calculated to subserve the cause of truth. And, if ever a pastor was justified in such a course, the subject of these pages was, at the date of the communication referred to.

The truth is, he had begun to question the utility of his labors in Providence; or, at least, to ask himself the

question, whether the evils he enumerates in this communication are not, to a great extent, neutralizing his efforts for good. He was, indeed, satisfied that unless measures were taken to provide a house of worship for the society, his ministry must prove unavailing, and that it was a duty, therefore, which he owed to himself and to the cause of truth, to seek another location.

In this state of suspense, he had deferred his reply to the invitation of the society to renew his engagements with it for another year, an invitation extended to him at the annual meeting of the society in April. But the action taken upon his communication reässured his heart, dispelled his doubts, and decided his course for the future. Nerving himself for duty once more, he, on the first of July, sent in his acceptance of the long-neglected invitation.

There is a man in the Second Universalist Society of Providence, who, through the instrumentality of Mr. Cook's labors, had been brought to a knowledge and belief of Universalism. Not without a little ambition for notoriety, he was early promoted to places of trust, which he always filled according to the best of his ability. He was, during the spring of 1847, full of zeal for his new faith. He may be described as more logical than learned, more devoted than devout, and, consequently, more fond of discussion than of those devotions which aid the soul in its attainment of the higher forms of the divine life. He is reputed a good man; he understands his Bible; he loves to talk on its doctrines, both in public and in private. He understands "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," and is ready to defend them against any and all

opposition. He understands the popular theology of the church; he is familiar with its defences, with all the passages quoted in its support. About the time of which we write, he was as "full of faith" as of "the Holy Ghost." He constantly carried his Bible with him. Passages in controversy between Universalists and others, together with those quoted in sermons to which he had listened, were indicated by the turning of the corners of leaves, by pencil-marks, and by strips of paper, until nearly every page, from Genesis to Revelation, bore marks of having been examined. Mr. Cook, on going into the desk in a conference-meeting, on one occasion, asked this brother for the loan of his Bible. That evening he selected for the topic of his remarks the importance of searching the Scriptures. Having dwelt on this subject for a few minutes, he remarked that "when a man embraces Universalism he is sure to find delight in studying his Bible. And here," continued he, holding up the pocket Bible of his friend, and exposing to the audience the "*marks*" which it contained, "here is an illustration of the fact which I have stated. This Bible, which you see, belongs to a man who, till recently, cared but very little for its contents. And now, under the influence of a better faith, every passsage of importance, from beginning to end, is noted. Here is a leaf turned, there a pencil-mark is drawn, and there a strip of paper arrests attention; and there," pointing to a slip cut from the *General Advertiser*, and pasted to the inside of the cover of the Bible, "there is a gem from a weekly paper, which, *for the want of more Scripture*, he has added to the word of God, as a part of his creed. It is in these words:

'Be thou like the old apostles,
Be thou like heroic Paul;
If a free thought seeks expression,
Speak it boldly ! speak it all !
Face thine enemies — accusers !
Scorn the prison, rack or rod !
And, if thou hast TRUTH to utter,
SPEAK ! and leave the rest to God.' "

This individual, in March, 1847, was invited by a Mr. Randall to hear a discourse bearing on Universalism, to be given at the house of the latter, by Rev. A. Latham, then pastor of the Fountain-street Wesleyan church, in Providence. He accepted the invitation, went, listened attentively, and, his opinion of the merits of the discourse being solicited, he remarked that he liked it so far as Mr. Latham preached *Bible-ism* — his only standard of a good sermon, then. Mr. Latham came immediately to the defence of his discourse against this implied charge, and a conversation ensued. But Mr. Randall would not have the subject of Universalism discussed under his roof, and it was, therefore, dropped. Feeling somewhat aggrieved by this decision of "the master of the house," our friend invited Mr. Latham to preach a discourre in *his* house at any time that would be most convenient to himself, and suggested that in this discourse he should attempt to prove that *sin and suffering will continue after the resurrection of the dead, and after the conclusion of the mediatorial reign of Christ.* Mr. Latham accepted the invitation thus extended to him, and promised that on some future day he would discourse on the subject proposed, from John 5 : 28, 29.

Thus originated a theological discussion in which Mr.

Cook was one of the disputants; a discussion which we purpose to notice in this connection.

Some eight months after Mr. Latham promised to preach his discourse on future punishment at the house of Mr. Lester, he notified the latter that he was at length prepared to redeem his pledge. Notice was accordingly given in Mr. Latham's church and in the church where Mr. Lester attended; and, on the 15th of November, a large audience assembled to hear the promised *Gospel.*

The main proposition to which he directed his efforts, was announced by Mr. Latham in the following words, namely:

"*There will be punishment after the* (*literal*) *resurrection of the dead.*"

This proposition was argued,

I. From the fact that the resurrection spoken of in the text (John 5: 28, 29) is but an *extension* of the one referred to in verses 21 and 25, in the same chapter; and the resurrection spoken of in these verses is a literal resurrection of dead bodies.

II. From the force of the word *graves.*

Under this head the reverend gentleman indulged in certain learned criticisms on the original word translated *graves* in the text.

III. The resurrection spoken of in the text *can mean nothing else* than a literal resurrection:

1. Not a spiritual resurrection; that would involve the following absurdities:

(1.) That some do good, and of course are righteous, while dead and buried in sin.

(2.) That some are made alive to God and holiness, to be damned.

2. Not a civil or political resurrection; because,

(1.) Such a resurrection the Jews never saw; and,

(2.) If they did, the declaration was in no way *limited* to the Jews.

IV. The Saviour would not have used such language, if he had been opposed to the doctrine of future punishment; because,

1. It would be easily perverted; and,

2. Falling in with the general belief, as it did, it would *naturally* be perverted.

V. Those who are claimed as Universalists in the primitive church believed in punishment after the resurrection. [Examples are quoted.]

Mr. Cook was present and took notes of this discourse, and, by appointment made on the evening of its delivery, replied to it in the same place, the evening following. This reply, prepared in great haste, was necessarily imperfect; but it leaves no position of Mr. Latham's discourse unnoticed. Admitting that the resurrection spoken of in the text is but an extension of that spoken of in the 21st and 25th verses, he contends, and very successfully, too, that these verses indicate a spiritual and not a literal resurrection. He shows that at the time the text was uttered "*Christ had not performed a single miracle of raising the dead.*"

Secondly, he shows that the term *graves*, in this text, furnishes no proof that our Lord was speaking of a literal resurrection, since the prophet (Ez. 37: 13, 14) uses the same term in speaking of the spiritual condition of

the whole house of Israel, when it had departed from the living God. He concludes, "As the words *dead* and *death* were used figuratively in verses 24 and 25, so was the word *graves* in the 28th verse."

He answered with equal clearness and simplicity the objections which Mr. Latham arrayed against the interpretation of the text usually given by Universalists; and, having thus prepared the way, he proceeded to give an exposition of the whole subject, which harmonized with the entire context, with the general tenor of Scripture, and with the published views of several distinguished critics who held to a limited salvation.

Mr. Latham subsequently repeated the substance of his discourse given at Mr. Lester's in his own desk, and, at the same time, reviewed the sermon of Mr. Cook. The next evening, in the same place,— the Rev. Mr. Latham's desk,— Mr. Cook repeated his reply in substance, reviewed his reviewer, and concluded with a most eloquent presentation of his faith. I quote a few of his concluding paragraphs.

"The subject now stands clear. Stripped of a false interpretation, it is now left to bear its own primary, natural, common-sense meaning. Our Lord was discoursing of *one kind of death* and *resurrection*, from verse 21 to 29. He used vivid figures, strong and forcible language, to convey to his hearers the great and important truths which he taught. They clearly understood him, because 'never *man* spake like this man.' The view which we have taken makes every part of the great Teacher's discourse harmonize. There appears no *abrupt dodging* from one subject to another; first

speaking of judgment *in this life*, and in the next breath of judgment *in eternity*; in one verse of a *moral resurrection*, in the next of a *literal*, without any notice of a change of subject. Christ was uniform in his phraseology, was plain and simple. His words had a meaning, and when they fell upon the slumbering consciences of men they were aroused to feel their condition."

These words were uttered in a spirit of perfect assurance. In his manner, in the tones of his voice, in the unction with which he spoke, as well as in his words, the deepest convictions of his soul were expressed. No one that heard him doubted that he was sincere, and that he was in earnest.

Thus closed the discussion, which others more than himself had been instrumental in getting up. The discourses delivered during its progress were subsequently published in pamphlet form by Mr. Cook, and a thousand copies of the work readily sold. It was extensively read in the city, and did excellent service to the cause of truth.

Mr. Latham at first proposed to share in the responsibilities of its publication, and also in the profits of its sale; but, heeding the advice of his friends, he finally concluded to do neither.

Soon after the termination of this discussion, the committee appointed by the society to procure a site for a church reported that a desirable lot could be leased on the corner of Broad and Eddy streets, and recommended immediate negotiations for the same. In May, 1848, they were instructed by a vote of the society, now organized under its new charter, to lease this lot; and I need not say that Mr. Cook had much to do with all

the arrangements which finally resulted in this action. I might, in truth, say that he was, indeed, the leading spirit in the councils of the committee, and the *moving* spirit in their actions.

Pending the negotiations, the pastor was busily employed in raising, by subscription, *ten thousand dollars*, the sum at that time deemed necessary to complete the contemplated church edifice. This, he foresaw, would be no easy task. But he did not shrink from it. While he felt that it *belonged* to others, he knew that, if done at all, it must be done by his personal influence. He, therefore, gave himself to it with a spirit of self-sacrifice, rarely equalled. Almost every leisure moment which he could find from the pressing duties of his office he devoted to it. In carrying it forward, he found it necessary to meet many objections, to conciliate many prejudices, to overcome many doubts, to revive a waning zeal, and to inspire confidence in many a cold and fearful heart. Scarcely one of his most intimate friends believed that he would accomplish his purpose; believed that, if he persisted in his efforts, anything better than defeat, pecuniary sacrifice, and public mortification, awaited him. Those who most sincerely wished him success, saw no rational ground of hope. They were willing to gratify what they very *charitably* regarded as *his* ambition; and to this end, many of them subscribed as liberally as he had reason to think they were able; but, as they put their names to the paper, they usually accompanied the act by a declaration of their faith *that he would fail!*

Yet he faltered not. With a prophet's zeal, inspired by visions of ultimate success, he went forward. Gently

rebuking those of little faith, and turning a deaf ear to all predictions of evil, he finally reached a point in his tedious way from which he saw the end, the realization of his hopes. Others now began to feel some confidence; and very soon the identical persons who had been loudest in their predictions of defeat were loudest in proclaiming the certainty of his success. They entered into his labors. Thus encouraged, he only applied himself with greater diligence. As the enterprise passed from the *possible* to the *probable*, he became more and still more anxious to push it forward into the region of *certainty*, and thus relieve it of all doubt. He no longer consented to work alone. He resolved to lay every *believer*, every one who had come to feel any degree of confidence in his measures, under contributions of aid. He succeeded in pressing many into service; many, too, whose doubts, but a short time previous, had been the most formidable obstacles to the prosecution of his labor. He called them out by the energy of his will, breathed into them his own earnest spirit, and thus compelled them to take a stand for that cause which had so completely absorbed all his thoughts.

His pulpit services were often made subservient to his *now* "ruling passion." One famous discourse, which he preached from the words, "*Let us rise and build*," will long be remembered in Providence. These words are found in Neh. 2 : 18, and the following is the connection which he employed as a forcible representation of the condition of his own people: "Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire; come,

let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God, which was good upon me, as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, '*Let us rise and build.*' So they strengthened their hands for this good work. But when Sanballat the Horomite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn and despised us, and said, 'What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?' Then answered I them, and said unto them, 'The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore, we his servants will *arise* and *build.*' "

After picturing the desolation to which the society must be reduced, if it remained without a church; the laugh of scorn which it must endure from avowed enemies, the reproach of the Sanballats, and Tobiahs, and Geshems, professing the same faith but maintaining the attitude of rivals, which would surely fall upon it; and the mortification which its members must forever feel under a consciousness of having failed in their last attempt to organize and sustain a second Universalist society in the city of Providence — after picturing the desolation of such a scene, he called upon them to achieve for themselves a brighter future, a future full of rewards for past efforts. He sought to arouse them to the accomplishment of this result by an appeal addressed,

1. To their pride.

2. To their love of ease, and comfort, and respectability; and,

3. To their love of the cause of truth.

The force of this sermon was acknowledged on all

hands. It served to prepare the minds of the people for his labors out of the desk. It quickened their self-respect, and their zeal in the cause of truth. True, it excited some feeling on the part of those who loved Mammon more than God, and awakened here and there a murmur of discontent. But, on the whole, its influence was salutary, and hastened the consummation of his object.

At length, after months of toil, incessant and exhausting toil, he had the happiness to report to the society that ten thousand dollars, the sum deemed necessary to complete the contemplated edifice, had been subscribed. It is needless to say that this was, in the society, an hour of rejoicing, of triumph. But it had been reached through struggles of which many of his most intimate friends had never known or dreamed. They did not forget to congratulate him on his success, but some of them *did* forget that they had ever doubted that he would succeed; and these were now ready to assert their claims to the honor of prophets, by declaring, with great self-complacency, that in the darkest hour of his enterprise they distinctly foresaw the glorious result.

I have said that this was a day of rejoicing in the society; but with the pastor rejoicing was mingled with sadness. His energies had been overtaxed, his system had become enfeebled, and he felt that he needed and must have repose. He therefore addressed the following note to his charge, May 30, 1848:

"Friends and Brethren: Last Sabbath I promised to lay before this society, this evening, a communication of some importance. I now proceed to fulfil that promise.

"You are aware, probably, that for nearly eight months past we have been engaged in trying to raise money and lease a lot, for the purpose of erecting a church. During the whole of this time, I have been employed from day to day, and from week to week, aiding the society in securing these objects. We have now, I am happy to say, accomplished both.

"My labors for the last six months have been immense. Some things *may* have been ill done, because done in haste. * * * * Since we struck the first blow to build a church, I have been in the field every moment. I have sacrificed my own pecuniary interest — have declined an invitation to settle where I could have had considerably more salary than you are now paying me, and have laid aside my own business altogether, for your sake. * * *

"For those extra labors and pecuniary sacrifices, I ask no reward — I demand no return. I am your servant for Christ's sake; and, while I am with you, shall ever labor for your good and gain. But my own health has become somewhat impaired, and I have had much and severe sickness in my family. A short time spent in the country, with a respite from labor and pastoral cares, we have thought would be grateful to our feelings, and beneficial to our health. By your permission we shall be able to go — not without."

He refers again to the place of meeting, as not only inconvenient, but also injurious to health, and declares:

"Few ministers could have endured it as long as I have. And I now desire, with your consent, to obtain leave of absence for two months during the warmest part of the

season — say through the months of June and July. I need not, however, say that, should you grant this request, I should not be able (on account of my limited means) to go, unless you consent to give me my time, and supply the desk at your own expense during my absence. * * * Yours, truly,

"J. M. Cook."

A request, like this, addressed to old-established societies, understanding the courtesies due to pastors, and ready at all times to discharge them with fidelity, would be likely to be regarded as somewhat *urgent*. But it is not improbable that, in the present case, addressed as it was to a new society, its *form* contributed to its success. It is due to the society, however, to say that it was generously and promptly responded to; and he was thus enabled to visit again the scenes of his childhood and early ministry.

He alludes to the severe sickness of his family, during the six months of his most exhausting labors; and any one acquainted with his active sympathies needs no assurance that he shared freely in the sufferings of his companion during her weeks of dangerous illness.

He also alludes to his invitation to settle, with an increased salary, over another society. This was the Third Universalist Society in Lowell — a society which, at that time, worshipped in a house more favorably located than any other belonging to the denomination in that city, and more pleasant in all its aspects. The society offered him a salary of eleven hundred dollars, with strong assurances of a liberal increase,— an increase proportioned to

the certain prosperity of the society, — together with perquisites far exceeding those he received in Providence. But, as he has intimated in his letter, he was willing to forego these advantages for the sake of his first charge in New England.

The question may be asked, — and it is deserving of a passing notice, — why such efforts as are indicated in the foregoing pages were necessary on his part, in order to raise the not very formidable sum of ten thousand dollars? why, especially, when his society was large, apparently zealous, and most of its members were men possessing a competency of this world's goods? The reasons are simple:

1. To engage as many different persons as possible in the enterprise, it was early agreed that the whole amount should be divided into one hundred shares, (one hundred dollars each); and his efforts were first directed to the securing of as many subscribers as there were shares provided for. This was no easy matter. One hundred men ready and willing to pledge themselves for the payment of one hundred dollars for the erection of a church are rarely found in any society. In this case the example of men who counted their wealth by thousands furnished excuses to others of humbler means for doing nothing.

This measure was found to be impracticable, and wisely abandoned. Subscriptions were increased in some instances, and other names were procured.

2. Many who were depended on to set an example of liberality in their subscriptions were owners of pews in the First Church. Withdrawing because they could no longer listen to the preaching there in peace, they re-

quested the society to accept the use of their pews, and release them from taxes on the same; let them to any persons desirous of worshipping there, get what revenue from them they could, and at the same time leave *their* title to them unimpaired. This was not, in the estimation of the owners of these pews, an unreasonable request. But the society needed the full amount of the annual tax imposed upon them, — never more than now, — and insisted upon either its payment or the sale of the pews.

This policy is sanctioned by custom. It may be just. It certainly is "lawful" in many cases, but is it always "expedient"?

A man actuated by high motives — by a sincere regard for that *form* of religion which he desires to promote among men — is called upon to subscribe from one hundred to five hundred dollars to aid in the erection of a temple of worship, where its principles may be taught. He responds to the call; he subscribes. He goes further. He enters into an arrangement with his associates, by which he is willing to be taxed on the amount subscribed from five per cent. to twenty per cent., annually, for the support of preaching. The preaching suits him, and he is satisfied.

But a majority decide to call to the pastoral office a man whom a very respectable minority cannot listen to with satisfaction. The latter come forward, and ask to be released from further contributions for his support, but are willing to grant the use of their property for this purpose, on condition their title to it is respected. Are the interests of a society promoted by strict adherence to the *letter* of the compact, if this adherence violates the *spirit* of the compact? Would not concession to equity

on the part of the majority, serve to check the growing alienation of the minority, and leave the way open for a union of both, when the subject of dispute between them was removed?

In my opinion, one great source of society dissension, especially in the larger towns of New England, would be removed, were every pew-owner allowed to surrender the occupancy of his pew to the society, after giving three months' notice of his intention to do so, and to claim exemption from taxation from and after the time of such surrender. He might be permitted to resume the occupancy thereof, after a like notice of three months.

But to return from this digression. The policy of the society in this matter (whether just or unjust) brought all pew property into disrepute in the eyes of those whose liberality was now to be taxed for the erection of a new church. Their prejudices against such property must be conciliated, before they would consent to subscribe. Many of them were free to declare they never would own another pew in a meeting-house. And it was therefore necessary to talk about stock, instead of pews. And this stock must be exempt from tax for the support of worship. And, with all these restrictions, there were some who thought they could not be too cautious about speculating in such odious investments.

Other obstacles lay in the way of his success in raising ten thousand dollars by subscription; but the two named were the most formidable.

Immediately after his request for leave of absence had been granted, he set about preparations for a journey, with his family, to Western New York. He was very

desirous of revisiting the scenes of his childhood and early ministry, and found this a most fitting opportunity. He had the happiness of attending the annual meetings of several associations, which were ever to him seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. He loved these meetings; and his return to them, after a few years' absence, was hailed by his brethren in the ministry, and by his numerous acquaintances among the people, with many demonstrations of delight.

On his return, he stopped at Camillus, to spend a few days with his mother, who was, at that time, on a visit at the house of her oldest son. It was a joyous occasion to him. He was among a people in whose service, as a school-teacher, he had spent several months. His former pupils and patrons met him with the most cordial greetings. In the house of his brother he found perpetual delight in the society of the children, in the memories of the past, in recalling family incidents, in rehearsing the story of his ministry, and in proclaiming his plans for the future. He was not long in arranging a visit to his birthplace, at the Falls; the Hollow where he had spent several years of his childhood; and, finally, to the old village cemetery where reposed the ashes of his father, his elder sister, three brothers, and both his grandfathers. Himself and wife, his eldest brother and wife, his mother and a nephew, Dr. Geo. W. Cook, constituted the party selected for this visit.

From the residence of my brother, in Camillus, to the old homestead and birthplace, is about three miles and a half. The road connecting these places he had frequently travelled on errands of business and of pleasure.

It winds along the western bank of the Nine Mile Creek, and is frequently crossed by little rivulets, having their source in springs gushing from the hill-side, in the immediate vicinity of the road. At these springs he was accustomed to stop, as he journeyed by them in days past; and now he must stop the carriage at each one, as he would stop to exchange compliments with an old and loved benefactor; bound from his seat, bow down and sip their running waters, leave his benediction upon them, and then resume his place in the carriage again. This somewhat singular ceremony was several times repeated during the brief journey, and, in every instance, with a spirit that would do credit to ordinary devotions. Did he feel, then, that this was the last pilgrimage that he should make to these fountains, now holding a sacred place in his memory?

Reaching the old farm-house, so intimately associated with all his earliest recollections, he felt no disposition to restrain an expression of his delight. He sprang from the carriage — cast a hurried glance over the whole scene — alas, how changed! The old, contracted, unpainted school-house, had given place to a more commodious structure. The trees in the orchard had drawn much nearer to each other, — at least, so it seemed. The distance between them was so much shortened, since his childhood gambols among them! The garden had changed; young and vigorous trees now occupied the place of those he had climbed, to gather the luscious fruit. The house was embosomed in shrubbery, which changed not only its relations to his old play-grounds, but its entire aspect. Everything, indeed, had changed,

except the rugged features of nature. These were the same, and therefore dear. He must look upon them from the site of the old log house. He repaired thither, and gazed with intense interest upon them,— the landscape so dear to memory, so romantic, and so full of beauty. The creek meandered along in its accustomed course; the falls were as musical as ever, and were spanned by the same bridge that he had so reluctantly crossed on his way from his first to a new home. He noted every object that, in his absence, had sprung up to change the scene daguerreotyped on his memory; but his chief delight consisted in gazing upon the wooded hills in the distance,— the outer limits of creation, as he regarded them once,— and in observing the cultivated fields which intervened — fields "white already for the harvest." As he gazed and meditated, silence and his glowing features alone proclaimed the intensity of his emotions.

From this spot, the party proceeded to the Hollow,— the place in which, as we have already noted, he spent several years of his childhood. Here they stopped for a brief visit with an old neighbor and friend. Scarcely had he found time to exchange the usual compliments which common courtesy demanded of him, after so long an absence, when his eye rested upon the little brook which adorns the valley, and he felt an irresistible desire to leave his company and go forth, "armed and equipped," to renew upon its banks, the sports of earlier years. Whether successful in this *fishing* enterprise or not, I am not informed; but he returned to the house of his friend, delighted to think he had enjoyed this precious opportunity.

From the Hollow they returned to Marcellus Village, and reached the graves of loved ones, just as the sun was sinking behind the western horizon. The object of their visit was enough to make them solemn and thoughtful. The hour was a fitting one to witness the last visit of an aged widow and her son to the grave of a departed husband and father. The carriage stopped before the gates of that little "garden of the dead," and the company, getting out, started, in silence broken only by sobs, for the graves they sought,— the mother leaning upon the arm of her son. Reaching the consecrated spot, she prostrated herself upon the grass-covered mound beneath which the ashes of his father rested, and there poured out her soul to God in prayer. She felt that it was the last time she should be permitted to visit the place in life, and, under this solemn conviction, her utterances were fervent and subduing. The company were all electrified with her emotions. On their part, tears and groans bespoke the power of her unconscious appeal for sympathy. James, overpowered by his emotions, bowed upon the humble slab on which was inscribed the name of his father, and sought relief in silent prayer. A few minutes after, he retired from the cemetery, painfully impressed with the conviction that it might be *his last visit!* And so it proved.

Soon after his return from Western New York, he wrote his brother thus:

Brother William: Since my arrival here, I have had a severe attack of the erysipelas. My face has been badly swollen, and I have been obliged to forego preach-

ing for three Sabbaths past. Am getting better now — able to preach.

"Otherwise we are well, and grateful for our safe return home.

"My church is going up finely. We shall have it done before long. Society is doing well."

I have purposely avoided frequent reference to Mr. Cook's family attachments,— especially his devotion to his mother,— for the reason that in this respect he was not peculiar — was, indeed, very much like others who have any just conceptions of human obligations, of the first duties of life. I may be allowed to say, however, that he always evinced a deep interest in the welfare of all,— parents, brothers and sister. He was happy of an opportunity to assist them in their struggles with the world; and, to the extent of his ability, he was as ready to extend to them *material aid*, when it was needed, as to impart counsel. Mother, in her letters, often acknowledges her obligations to his generosity, and thanks God for such a son. The following letter reveals the depths of his affection for her. It was written on the receipt of one communicating to him the intelligence of her last sickness,— written, indeed, after her decease, but before he learned the fact.

"PROVIDENCE, Dec. 29, 1848.

'DEAR BROTHER WILLIAM: I have just received your letter. Painful, indeed, was the intelligence which it brought me. Ten thousand are the thoughts which rush upon my mind, all demanding expression — demand-

ing more than my feeble pen is able to give. I still hope that mother is better,— that life will yet triumph over disease and death. But my hope is mingled with fear. She seemed so feeble, the last time I saw her, that I was painfully impressed that I never should see her again on earth,— that her kiss was the last I should receive, and that her farewell, uttered in the broken accents of grief, at our parting, was the last that should tremble upon her lips in my hearing. But I pray, if it be God's will, that she may yet be spared; or, if she must die, that her death may be a quiet and peaceable one. I know that her heart is full of faith and trust in God. These were her comfort in life,— they will be her support in death. If she recovers her reason, O, mention me to her once more! She knows that I love her; my heart has always been with her. But my feelings are too much excited, my apprehensions too intense, to write more at the present time.

"In regard to her burial, should she die, I will say, *let her request be strictly complied with.* You can write to Sidney in advance, and notify him of your coming. He will make arrangements for a funeral service at his house,— either a prayer or a sermon,— and then, regarding her last wish, let her remains be buried by the side of father's. This is our last duty; let us do it cheerfully. Whatever the expenses may be, they shall be paid.

"Enclosed I send you *ten dollars*, which I this day intended to send to mother, as a New-Year's present. Give it to her, if yet alive; if not, use it as an ex-

pression of my gratitude for your unwearied kindness to her.

"Thine truly,

"JAMES M. COOK."

But, ere this epistle was penned, the spirit of that sainted mother had passed from earth, to the bosom of that Father whom she loved, trusted and adored. According to her last request, her remains were conveyed from Lockport, where, in the house of her son, she breathed her last, to Camillus. Here a funeral discourse was preached by Rev. N. Brown, who had known her well. Thence the body was removed to Marcellus, and interred beside her companion and children who had gone before.

Thus early were her presentiments realized,— presentiments which she felt and expressed five months before, when retiring from that spot which for years had been to her the most precious of all on earth,— expressed to *him* who was destined so soon to join her in the realms of life.

On receiving the intelligence of her death, he wrote as follows:

"PROVIDENCE, Jan. 4, 1849.

"DEAR BROTHER WILLIAM: I received your letter mailed by T. D. C., in Boston, Wednesday, January 3d, bearing to my anxious heart the mournful intelligence of mother's death. By referring to my last letter, you will see that I wrote under the influence of very faint, if any, hopes of her recovery. I could imagine too well her failing health the last time I saw her; and,

judging from that, I was not long in deciding that she could not long wrestle with any powerful disease.

"My feelings, on receiving your letter, cannot be described, though I was in a measure prepared for its melancholy tidings. From a child, I had been strongly attached to mother. She always appeared to me the same being,— the same anxious, warm-hearted, devoted, praying, loving *mother*. Though I have been separated from her most of the time for eleven years, yet every time I met her, every line I received from her trembling hand, made me more and more sensible of the constancy and depth of her affection,— of her unwavering devotion to her children. This predominant sentiment of her heart — always standing out so prominent in her character, always manifesting itself with such perfect clearness in every action, through her whole life — moved my admiration, and awakened affections in my heart which her death cannot quench; affections which with me can know no change, and which, through my whole pilgrimage on earth, even so long as my heart continues its pulsations, or my lips are able to pronounce the sacred name of *mother*, shall turn to *her* as 'the dearest idol I have known.'

"There is a strange feeling pervading my soul when I try to realize that she is dead,— that I shall see her again on earth no more. My sorrow-stricken heart cries out within me for relief. Yesterday, after the receipt of your letter, I passed the day in solemn, mournful meditation, and late in the evening retired to my bed, only to feel after her sacred presence in my sleep. But the heavings of the troubled sea within, startled me again

and again from disturbed slumbers to a consciousness of that melancholy truth, *she is no more! she is dead!* But the morning came, and with the soothing influences of the Gospel, a measure of rest for my over-burdened soul. I heard with gratitude the echoes of his voice who said, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted,' and praised God for the consolations of these words.

"It is impossible for me to write as I feel, because language fails me while I strive to give utterance to my thoughts. I believe I mentioned in my last letter how sensibly I felt impressed, when I parted with mother at brother Sidney's, that it would be the last time I should see her on earth. It was a trying moment with my soul, as I struggled to hide that conviction from her,—to say farewell, and to receive with becoming calmness her parting *kiss*. This impression was fastened upon my mind while visiting the grave of our beloved father. I had felt a great anxiety to visit his grave after his burial, but never till then had found an opportunity. Sidney, his wife and son George, with mother, myself and wife, visited Union Falls, where we were born, the Hollow where we had lived, and the quiet village of Marcellus, in whose beautiful church-yard we had long since buried our beloved dead. It was late in the day when we reached the cemetery. The sun was just setting, and his soft, retiring rays, as they fell upon the resting-place of the dead, gave the scene a beautiful, though truly solemn and impressive appearance. We walked quietly into the yard, mother leaning on my arm, till we ap-

proached sufficiently near, when she relaxed her hold, and bowed herself beside the stone erected to the memory of her dear husband, *our father*. Her whole soul now seemed to be in commotion; her deep, moving, agitated heart, in giving vent to its feelings, shook the very frame that encased it. O, how the memories of the past, the associations of the present, and the *presentiments* of the future, rushed upon my mind! There we all stood, striving to hold the mastery over our feelings, but striving in vain. At length mother broke the awful spell that seemed to bind us, by rising and pointing to a little flower that lifted its beautiful head above the earth, close to the tomb-stone, and saying, '*The language of that flower is*, FORGET ME NOT.' I could no longer control my feelings. I felt as if a living voice had spoken from that grave and said, '*Forget me not.*' And never shall I forget that visit. Too solemn were its moments, too impressive its lessons, to be forgotten.

"When retiring from the grave, I felt that it would be the farewell visit of mother; but little did I think her time would be so short,— that within six short months we should be called to bear her body to that peaceful abode of the dead. But it is even so. She has gone,— her spirit to God who gave it, to join her companion and children in heaven, and her body to the dust. Let us, therefore, submit to the will of Him who orders all things in wisdom and in love. Let us ever cherish as sacred the memory of our dear departed mother, and honor that memory by a daily exhibition of those virtues which she labored so assiduously to inculcate in our souls.

"During my visit with her, mother expressed her fears

that she never should be permitted to see all her children again in this life; but still she cherished a strong desire that she might be blessed with this privilege, especially that she might again see Lafayette. As he was the youngest, she felt strongly and peculiarly attached to him. He had often been with her in sickness, and cheered many of her lonely hours, even in health, after father's death, and after her older children left home. For this boon, therefore, she prayed; and it would seem that God heard and answered her prayer, bringing this child again to her arms from the far West. O, how thankful must he feel! what hours of satisfaction remain to him as he reflects that in his absence he remembered his aged mother, and returned in season not only to receive her parting benediction, but also to see her die! His and De Witt's long absence wore sadly upon her feelings, and occasioned her many sorrowful hours. But, cheered by his presence, she passed quietly away, and with *her* sadness and sorrow are over. * * * *

"Theodore writes me that he made the same suggestion to you, in regard to having mother buried in Marcellus, that I did in my last. Of course you will see that it is done, and look to us for the expense. * * Please preserve some little thing that mother has owned, that I may have as a keepsake.

"Thine, in affliction,

"J. M. Cook."

On the next Sabbath after receiving the intelligence of his mother's death, he preached a sermon relating to the sad event; and, as expressive of the attitude of his

spirit, he selected for his text (Psalms 35 : 14), "*I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.*"

The new church was gradually approaching a completion, and much care necessarily devolved on him. The society was still prosperous, and hopeful of a brighter future. The members were beginning to look forward to the dedication as to the realization of cherished hopes, and to promise themselves on that day a season of exultation. The ladies belonging to the society, with a noble spirit of self-sacrifice, came forward and gave themselves to the work of obtaining the means to furnish the pews with cushions, the floors with carpets, and the pulpit with a sofa. He served as their agent in the purchase of most of these articles, and while they toiled he encouraged and often amused them with his own bright visions of the future.

We have before intimated that there is nothing so effectual in awakening interest in a society as active effort in its behalf. Elevate it to a condition of self-sufficiency, of independence, and give its members to feel that without exertion on their part it will lack no pecuniary resources to carry on its operations, and zeal dies out in the hearts of its members. But leave it in a condition in which labor is necessary to secure pecuniary resources and such services as its members will appreciate, and engage them in this labor, and prosperity is no longer doubtful. It is, therefore, a judicious policy to engage all the ladies of a society in the work necessary to furnish a new church, as a fitting preparation of the whole body for the period which immediately follows its

dedication,— *the period for renting or selling the pews.* Partly with a view to this preparatory process, and partly from motives of economy, Mr. Cook urged the necessity of dispensing with the services of professional upholsterers, and encouraged "domestic manufactures" of all the cushions, carpets, etc. Indeed, for a few weeks before the dedication of the church, led on by his example and directed by his counsel, the whole society was unusually active; and, as a legitimate result, after the house was dedicated, when it was decided to rent the pews, and the choice at auction, the bidding was brisk, and the premium-money formed no inconsiderable item in the resources of the society for the ensuing year.

The dedication of the house took place April 6th, 1849. The dedicatory sermon was delivered by the pastor, who directed attention to the great objects for which the house was erected, and then, in a most impressive manner, dedicated it to the service of God, for the achievement of these objects.

Like many of his sermons, the one delivered on this occasion was prepared in moments snatched from a pressure of other cares and duties, and showed marks of haste in composition, and some want of continuity of thought in the different subjects of which he treated. It was, however, in many respects an able sermon, and was listened to with a profound interest by the crowded auditory before him.

I have spoken of its preparation. On arriving in Providence in the evening previous to the dedication, I found him at the church, with many things there to care for and arrange, to engage his most earnest attention.

From the church we proceeded to his residence. One of his children was unwell, and during the night required his almost constant care. After supper he pointed to his manuscript, saying, "There is my sermon for to-morrow morning!" I took it up, and found that not more than one half the contemplated labor of writing had been performed. I insisted upon his retiring to his study, and completing his task. But no; he had many things to talk about, some family reminiscences to relate, and hours wore away before the company retired, and he was left alone to devote his attention to his half-finished discourse. Of course, between the care of his sick child and his writing, he found little time for sleep, and the next morning he was wan, weak and weary; and, as one would naturally suppose, by reason of the night's exertions, unfitted in a great measure for the duties of the day.

This case illustrates one of the great faults of his life. He was too ready to expend his physical energies in the performance of duties from which a minister should always be exempt, and thus to misapply the time which should have been devoted to study, and to a more careful preparation for the duties of the sacred desk.

From the time this house was dedicated to the close of his ministry in Providence, his meetings were largely attended, and a good degree of interest was manifested in his labors. But he felt disappointed in the action of the society in regard to his support. He thought he had reason to anticipate increased attention on the part of its members to his temporal wants, when, by the removal from a public hall to a neat and commodious church, all

the aspects of the society were so sensibly changed for the better. Thus far, his expenses had been equal to his income, and he felt that he could not, in justice to himself or to his family, continue to labor without assurances of a support which would enable him to lay aside something that, in case of his incapacity to preach, sickness or death, he and those whom he loved might be secured against the necessity of public beggary. Such prudence *may be* unworthy of a minister of Christ,— such a habit of taking "thought for the future," but a questionable mark of a true disciple. It certainly *is so*, in the judgment of many who go to make up our religious societies. Their ideas of propriety lead them to calculate the precise expense of *living* which *they* incur, and to pronounce a demand for more than this scanty sum an evidence of unpardonable extravagance, if made by the minister of the Gospel.

To this economy predominating in religious societies must be ascribed many of the evils that Christians, of all denominations, so sincerely deplore.

1. *The scarcity of ministers* — of able and efficient ministers. This should surprise no one; it is the legitimate result of that worldly economy which rules the church. Talents that should be sacred to the ministry of Christ are diverted from his service, and unwillingly given to professions far more remunerative and far less laborious than the sacred office.

2. The frequent disruption of pastoral connections, the stability of which is so essential to the permanent spiritual growth of both pastor and people. To-day we behold such a connection cemented by mutual love and confi-

dence. To-morrow it is severed, and we ask the reason why? The pastor has been invited to settle with another society. The new claimant for his services has offered him a hundred dollars more salary than he is at present receiving, and he has concluded to accept it. "A sordid motive has governed his decision," you say. Perhaps not. Possibly that one hundred dollars was absolutely necessary to meet his current expenses for the year. Without it he must involve himself in debt and all its mortifications, and leave eventually dishonored, in debt with no resources, and, perchance, to be mocked or honored, at last, with some beautiful parting present, expressive of the high regard of his hearers for his faithful and efficient services. Presents are well enough; they serve a valuable purpose when made in acknowledgment of services rendered, of love inspired by devotion to duty on the part of the minister, or as an expression of regard for the pastoral office. But when they come as a meagre atonement for past neglect, as an apology for unrequited toil, or as a charity designed to alleviate embarrassments which common justice and fair dealing had prevented,— in a word, when they come as an excuse for dismissal or for causes which compelled a resignation, they are but sad remembrancers of the past. To such presents, most ministers would prefer the awards of simple justice.

In June following the dedication of the church, he received a letter from James L. Camp, Esq., secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Universalist society in Baltimore, desiring to know if he was "so situated that he could accept a call from said society, and, if so, on what

terms." This inquiry led to a correspondence, in which negotiations for a settlement in that city were finally concluded, and he removed thither the first of November ensuing. I shall have occasion to allude to this correspondence hereafter.

A thousand ties bind a faithful pastor to his charge, and thoughts of severing these ties inevitably agitate and disturb the soul. Such thoughts were peculiarly painful to one of his strong attachments. He had been with this people through struggles which tried their devotion to the cause. He encouraged them, when depressed with apprehensions of failure, to establish and maintain a well-organized society. He led them on to victories through great tribulation. He had visited them in their afflictions, prayed with them in their sickness, calmed their grief as some object of their affection walked through the valley and shadow of death, soothed their anguish in the hour of mourning, and remembered the bereaved in his prayers as they came up to the sanctuary, to seek at the altar of the living God the consolations of religion. He had endeared himself to their children by his familiar manner in the family circle, and by his unwearied efforts in behalf of the Sabbath-school. And, though some may have evinced a want of gratitude for such services, still in the performance of them he had bound his own heart to them — even to the unthankful — and to their interests as a religious society, in cords that could not be severed without the most painful struggle. From the time, therefore, that the letter of inquiry from Baltimore reached him, until he finally dissolved his connection with the Providence society, his mind seemed to be in a state

of uneasy and unhealthy excitement. At seasons he was flushed with hope in view of the prospect before him; and then again his heart turned in a deeper affection to those whom he was about to leave. But through this most undesirable experience he labored on, giving more especial attention to matters pertaining to their spiritual interests. During this period he obtained the names of about forty persons who were willing to unite for the organization of a church; and it was his happiness, in the conclusion of his labors in Providence, to unite with this little band of disciples for the first time in celebrating the Lord's supper. The scene was impressive and deeply interesting to a large audience. During the day he had pronounced his valedictory, and this service was reserved for the evening. Mrs. Ellis had brought an offering to the infant church,— a splendid copy of Harper's Illuminated Bible; and Mrs. Fenner a still more expensive tribute,— a *communion service;* and he was desired to present the same to the church in their behalf. The presentation was accompanied by very appropriate remarks on the value of the Bible as a divine revelation, and on the nature and design of the Lord's Supper. This ceremony was followed by the administration of the ordinance, and by the mutual adieus of pastor and people.

Thus closed his labors in Providence,— closed four eventful years of an eventful ministry. Many felt, on parting with him, that, however bright his prospects might be, the society he had been most instrumental in founding would realize no permanent advantage from a change of pastors.

CHAPTER XXV.

HIS LAST MOVE.

In the correspondence with Mr. Camp, alluded to in the preceding chapter, arrangements for preaching in Baltimore, as a candidate, were consummated July 5, 1849, and henceforth he was left to speculate on the probabilities of a change in his pastoral relations,— to speculate on a subject anything but agreeable to an affectionate and devoted pastor.

On his way to Baltimore, an incident occurred which made a very deep impression on his mind, and, like all events in which the holier and kindlier affections of the human heart are displayed, lent confirmation to his religious faith,— a faith which points to the reünions of heaven as embracing all souls between whom love and sympathy existed on earth, as necessary to the happiness of the redeemed. On leaving Philadelphia in the cars, he noticed four children, quite young, and apparently intrusted to the sole care of a servant. His love of children made them objects of deep interest to him, and, true to the instincts of his nature, he very soon ingratiated himself into their favor, and, gaining their confidence, entered into their childish sports.

In a letter addressed to the parents of these children, and written immediately on his return to Providence, he states the circumstances which led to his acquaintance with these juvenile travellers, develops the incident to which allusion has been made, and exhibits the operations of his mind in gleaning evidences of his religious faith from the more beautiful and touching revelations of the human heart. He says :

"Being seated near your children, they attracted my attention very soon after I entered the cars. Their looks, quietude, childish conversation, and apparent eagerness to move rapidly forward, interested me. I saw none whom I could call their parents. This fact served to increase my interest in their situation. They expected to meet you, and I sympathized in their longings for this coveted boon. I examined, very anxiously, every arrival, to see if I could detect the countenances which they so impatiently waited to see. At last my anxiety was removed. The moment you entered the door, the spontaneous burst of parental names rang through the cars, and, with extended arms, tearful eyes, laughing and still crying for joy, they greeted you with many kisses. Had the greatness, beauty, wealth, splendor and loveliness of the whole world, been combined into a single gift and been presented to them, it would not have excited so much joy and satisfaction as did that meeting. To see the mingled expressions of childish innocence and love which lighted up the countenances of John W., Mary V., little Annie, and sweet, pretty Kate, when they felt your embrace, was truly exciting to all; to me it was overpowering. It sent a thrill through my whole being.

And thus overcome, I bowed my head, and gave vent to emotions I could no longer control."

In subsequently reflecting upon this scene, so suggestive of the deep mysteries of the human heart, of the depth and intensity of filial and parental love, it occurred to him that it furnished a beautiful illustration of a prominent feature of his religious faith,— his faith in the all-embracing and indissoluble love of our heavenly Father. He saw in it a most forcible condemnation of the popular idea that He will eventually divide his own offspring with the devil. And he could not repress his curiosity to know the verdict of their hearts upon the truthfulness of this idea. He therefore approached them on this point, but with great delicacy of feeling. "What would have been the experience of your hearts," said he, in a most impressive manner, "if, on entering the cars, you had been told, *two of your children are gone,— lost beyond recovery ?* "

The question elicited a significant and simultaneous reply from both parents. It would have been the death of the mother,— so she believed. The father was in perfect horror at the bare suggestion of the thought; he *never could have recovered from the shock.*

It was perfectly natural that the thought should occur to him,— that the inquiry should agitate his mind, — "If God is a father, if his love is infinitely stronger, more active and efficient, in securing the welfare of its objects, than is the love of these parents, *how can he ever forget or forsake his children ?* " But he did not propose this question to them; their own emotions might have suggested it.

While in Baltimore, he called upon them, and was politely received. He found that his question had been the subject of remark in the family circle. He obtained the names of the children, and, on returning to Providence, in the letter before mentioned he employed the incident to illustrate, rather to suggest an idea of, the indissoluble connection between God and man,— between the infinite Father and his intelligent and dependent offspring.

He was desirous of knowing what effect this letter might have upon their minds,— whether or not it created any doubts of their Baptist theology,— and therefore concluded it with a proposition to call upon them.

His labors in Baltimore were regarded with great interest by the society, and on the 20th of August they addressed him the following letter :

"Rev. J. M. Cook.

"Dear Sir and Brother: At a meeting of the 'Second Universalist Society' of this city, convened in the church, August 19th inst., it was unanimously

"'*Resolved*, That the Trustees be authorized to invite Rev. Jas. M. Cook, of Providence, R. I., to take the pastoral charge of this society, at a salary of *fifteen hundred dollars per annum*.'

"I take great pleasure in communicating the above resolution of our society, and earnestly hope you will accept it.

"This offer has been made after due consideration on the part of the society, and the unanimity of feeling manifested on the occasion gives assurance that should

you accept, your ministrations will result in the upbuilding of the glorious cause of Universalism in this region.

"Truly yours,

"WILLIAM BAYLEY,

"*Chairman Board Trustees.*

"JAMES L. CAMP, *Secretary.*"

In addition to this official call, the secretary of the Board of Trustees forwarded a private note, urging most eloquently an immediate acceptance of the invitation, and presenting some interesting facts not embodied in the "official document." He says:

"BRO. COOK: Our society held a meeting yesterday in the church, and *unanimously* resolved to call you, at a salary of fifteen hundred dollars per annum. The *official document* has been forwarded to Providence, and I have thought best to communicate a few facts, that you might be prepared to accept the proposition at the earliest possible moment. It is indeed gratifying to me (and no doubt will be to you) to know that, out of the many names that have been before the society, yours was the *only one* that was considered. The minds of all those who were at the meeting (which was very large) seemed intently concentrated on you. The vote was taken, and not one dissenting voice was heard. Should you accept our invitation (and I earnestly pray you will), you will come to a society that, at this time, feels determined no longer to struggle in the dust, but having, as it will have, confidence in its pastor, will come boldly up to the work,— will encourage his heart and sustain his arm in the conflict to which it summons him."

With all these considerations pressing upon his mind and heart, he could do no less than accept the very honorable invitation extended to him by the society in Baltimore,— could do no less than go forth to that field on which his last battle was fought, and his greatest victory, the victory over death, was finally won.

Nor was it a sordid motive alone that governed him, as we have before intimated. When chided by the writer with ingratitude for leaving a charge he had loved and served so well,— leaving it just at the moment when all its prospects seemed so cheering,— he replied, with deep emotion, in substance as follows :

" So it may seem to you, and to the world. But God knows my heart, and he only knows what I have endured, what anguish of spirit, in consequence of the untiring opposition I have encountered there, *not from the people.* I long for rest,— for repose from this protracted turmoil and contention ; and, God helping me, I have determined to seek it in Baltimore."

He replied to the Baltimore invitation, formally accepting it, September 6, 1849. About the same time, he tendered his resignation, and asked his dismissal from the pastoral charge of the Second Universalist Society in Providence. A meeting of the society was held September 12th, at which it was

" *Voted*, That Bro. Cook be requested to withdraw his application for dismission."

The committee appointed to communicate this vote to Mr. Cook say :

" We would most affectionately ask you to give to this

request that consideration which the importance of the subject demands. We hope and trust, on a review of the whole matter, you will conclude to continue your connection with us as pastor.

"SAMUEL H. WALES,
"JOHN K. LESTER, } *Com.*"

We may well suppose that it cost him a great sacrifice of feeling to say no to this request. But he was not of the number who seek to advance their own importance to a society by requesting a dismission from its service. He had never been in the habit of coquetting with other societies for the sake of employing the invitations he might secure to give permanency and increased value to his pastoral relations. He had considered the whole subject well, before he decided to ask his dismission and to change his location. He appreciated the kindness and courtesy of the society, expressed by the committee, but still pleaded for his release as early as the first of November ensuing,— four years from the time he commenced his labors in its service. His request was finally granted, many voting for it confidently believing that his stay in Baltimore would be temporary, and that in the course of a few years, at most, he would return to Providence under more favorable auspices, for a permanent home.

His stay was indeed short in Baltimore, but the permanent home that awaited his removal hence was not in the city of Providence, but in that "city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God;" in the "Father's house" of "many mansions;" in that "build-

ing of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

All his correspondence, from this time forward, until he was settled in Baltimore, was characterized by a tinge of melancholy. So much so, indeed, were the letters which he sent to Mr. Camp, that the latter felt called upon, on several occasions, to rally him on his despondency, and for his encouragement to give the most glowing descriptions of the prospects of the society under his charge. He says, in a letter dated September 18, 1849:

"I know you will feel a deep grief in the hour of parting. To sever the ties of friendship which years of pastoral duties have developed and strengthened,— to leave, as it were, your home, to sojourn with strangers, to make new friends,— to do all this requires a stout heart and a self-sacrificing spirit. But I hope the thought that you go to fulfil the great mission with which Christ has charged you,— to preach the Gospel, and labor for God's holy cause,— will cheer you in the dreaded hour which awaits you. And we assure you that you will be received here with open arms and warm hearts."

So, again, in a letter dated October 13, he says:

"I am deeply sensible of the great sacrifice you are about to make for the cause, and pray that the Lord may strengthen you for the trial and the task before you. We hope to make your residence here pleasant and agreeable."

However grateful these precious words, coming from his future home, they failed to inspire anticipations which were not colored by hues of sadness, and he looked forward with mingled emotions of hope and distrust. He

tried to flatter himself that he had acted wisely in the change he contemplated, and to persuade his friends of the same fact. His correspondent in Baltimore prayed earnestly that it might be "HIS LAST MOVE," and in a letter addressed to his brother he utters the same sentiment. And so it proved. Reverently, however, may we say of Him who governs all things, "His ways are not our ways, neither are his thoughts our thoughts."

CHAPTER XXVI.

BALTIMORE EXPERIENCES.

On the 31st of October, 1849, Mr. Cook bade adieu to Providence and its cherished associations, and with his family directed his course towards Baltimore. It was a sad hour to many hearts. But 'tis past; and on they speed to find a new home among strangers. Capt. Walker, whose name is familiar to travellers on the Stonington route to New York, received them cordially on board the steamer Vanderbilt, bade them welcome to their passage, and spared no pains to make that passage as agreeable as possible. He seemed to have some just and honorable conceptions of the trial through which they had just past, and sought in many ways to dispel the gloom which that trial was calculated to fasten, for the time, on their minds. He, too, has gone home. Many clergymen, who have shared the advantages of his courtesy, will unite with me in saying, *peace to his memory!*

On arriving in New York the next morning, about daylight, they found Mr. Balch, who had, at that early hour, walked some two miles to greet them, and to bid them God-speed on their journey. They felt and duly appreciated his gracious benedictions.

Mr. Cook was a successful pastor in all the societies

to which he ministered in his native state. He was still more successful in Providence, considering the hindrances to success which he was there obliged to encounter. And his brief ministry in Baltimore shows that he was equally well adapted to that field of labor. He was quick to perceive the wants of a society, and fertile of inventions to meet them. He usually surveyed the whole field which he was engaged to cultivate. He detected, at a glance, the capabilities of the soil, and estimated the *quantity* and *quality* of the fruit it should bear. If it was overrun with noxious weeds, they did not escape his notice. If only here and there a plant which the "Father had not planted" sprung up, he saw it, and counted the cost of subduing it — of exterminating it forever.

On going to Baltimore, he found that the society expected quite as much of him as it is prudent for any religious society to expect of its pastor. A somewhat unfortunate reputation had preceded him; and he was looked upon as possessing some magical power, by which he could reach far down into the coffers of his hearers, gather up their treasures, employ them, with equal facility, for the erection of a church, *or for the payment of a church debt*, and still command their respect for himself as a benefactor. His efforts in Providence, in this direction, had acquired for him not a very enviable celebrity; but, still, it was such a celebrity as a society burdened with a most oppressive debt would be likely to prize quite as highly as it really deserves — a celebrity which was not among the least inducements that moved the society in Baltimore to offer him an annual salary of *five hundred dollars* more than they had ever paid

to any of his predecessors, and to feel a wonderful degree of confidence in the results of this pecuniary venture. And hence the attitude of the society, when he commenced his labors among them, must have presented rather a novel sight to a disinterested spectator. They received him, anticipating, in the progress of his ministry, some great result — some favorable turn of the wheel of fortune; and, after he entered into their service, they waited with mingled emotions of anxiety and awe for the commencement of operations which should realize to them this dream of prosperity.

But he was not in haste to begin. He took time to consider what was to be done. He informed himself in regard to all the liabilities of the society. He cultivated the acquaintance and secured the confidence of the creditors of the society, who were, with few exceptions, among its most worthy and respected members. He assured all with whom he conversed that it was needless to look for success to his ministry *while that debt was suffered to remain unpaid.* It was paralyzing the energies, and crushing out the very vitals, of the society. They could bear up under it but a little while longer. The time would soon come when the alternative would be presented them, either to discharge the *debt* or the *pastor.*

In this way, he brought the society to see the magnitude of the evil which was wasting its energies, and seriously threatening its existence.

The following communication from his successor in Baltimore will be read with interest in this connection, indicating, as it does, his experience there:

"Rev. T. D. Cook.

"My Dear Sir: I am pleased to learn that you have in course of preparation, and intend publishing, a memoir of your deceased brother, Rev. James M. Cook. Such a work, faithfully executed, will, I am sure, prove highly acceptable to his numerous friends and acquaintances; and certainly to none more so than to those in this city. I shall cheerfully contribute what you desire to your undertaking.

"Your brother came to Baltimore at the proper time; that is, when his services were most needed. The Second Universalist Society had entered upon a crisis that demanded immediate attention, and the efficient services of a competent man. Fourteen thousand dollars in debt; dispirited with the misfortunes of years; its treasury collapsed and empty; its best and long-tried friends doubtful of the future,—it needed a strong leader, of abundant resources, untiring energy, and indomitable will. That leader was found in the person of your brother. He was, I should say, a natural-born worker. He seems to have been a man capable of those Napoleonic movements that sometimes change the entire face of things, and open up new epochs. His determination was immense; his energy, unbounded. He was certainly very ambitious, but not selfishly so. He cared more for the cause in which he had embarked than for his own personal advancement or aggrandizement. His personal qualities eminently fitted him for the emergency he had consented to encounter, and insured success. The confident ease with which he met and dispersed difficulties,—and those really of an appalling magnitude,—the rapidity

with which he pushed forward his plans to ultimate execution, astonished his friends and the indifferent alike.

"He came here in the month of November, 1849, and he immediately commenced the work of removing the society's pecuniary embarrassments. A huge mortgage of seven thousand dollars was first to be met and disposed of. But how? At a social gathering at the house of D. A. Randall, the subject was one of the topics of discussion. It was proposed, by E. W. Robinson, one of the mortgagees, to surrender the individual claims in that instrument to the society; and he offered to take the initiatory step, by the surrender of his own. The proposition was favorably received, and the work of relinquishment was begun. The following persons relinquished the sums annexed to their names: R. C. Mason, $2,000; the widow of the late Capt. John Myers, $2,109; Frederick Fickey, $500; J. S. Cutler, $300; J. Parker, $300; E. W. Robinson, $250; Wm. Bayley, $250; R. Mason, $250; Wm. Grey, $200; H. Devalin, $200; M. Dorsey, $200; J. P. Merritt, $200; C. Sisco, $100; D. L. Maulsby, $100; comprising in all, with some contingent items, over seven thousand dollars! The mortgage was thus extinguished.

"This was a splendid operation, and had a most favorable effect on the fortunes of the new pastor. It established at once his reputation as a successful manager, and fixed him firmly in the confidence of the society. Looking back on the transaction now, it seems a work of little difficulty; but it must be remembered that it was an old sore, that no previous physician had been able to heal. The immediate predecessor of Mr. Cook, during

a pastorate of upwards of seven years, had been utterly unable to accomplish it. Some of those same mortgagees were selfish, hard-fisted men, accustomed to consult mainly their own personal interests, and who cared the least possible for the well-being of the society; and it required more than ordinary tact and management to bring them to terms. The task, we know, was a difficult one, and demanded for its successful execution a man of peculiar temperament and presence of mind, and who was accustomed to mingle with and influence men of the world. A mere preacher will not do for such undertakings. A man who would succeed in pecuniary transactions with men must not only understand the Gospel of Christ, and be able to preach a good sermon, but he must know also equally well the gospel of human nature. In this connection lies a great and pernicious error among the fraternity of preachers. The fixed sentiment of society forbids a preacher mingling among his fellowmen as a man of the world. Devoted to preaching and pastoral duties, he is not supposed to need acquaintance with the world around him. Alas! the world lieth in wickedness, and why should he defile himself? Business, social life, pleasure, amusement, of these things he is compelled, by iron custom, to remain profoundly ignorant. If he obtain a knowledge of them, it must be surreptitiously, and without noise. It has been well said, that popular opinion would compel a preacher to confine himself to the preaching of two little sermons on Sunday, visiting the ladies during the week, eating sweet cakes and drinking green tea!

"At any rate, preachers generally manifest a most lamentable and often ludicrous ignorance of business

transactions, and of the customs, forms and manners of society. Mr. Cook undoubtedly had broken the time-honored harness, and stepped out of the prescribed bounds into personal and manly freedom. He was acquainted with men and the customs of society, and was a shrewd observer of the motives and springs by which the actions of men are influenced; and hence, in a great degree, his triumphant success in this important undertaking. Many amusing anecdotes are now related of Mr. Cook and his operations in lifting the old mortgage.

"But, besides the embarrassment of the mortgage, there remained a debt, widely scattered, of equal, if not greater dimensions,— say near eight thousand dollars. This amount must be raised by subscription, and among those who could not be expected to contribute large sums for the purpose. Mr. Cook met this emergency promptly with the following subscription-paper; confided, in part, to the care of ladies and gentlemen willing to undertake the work:

"'FREELY HAVE YE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE.'

"'We, the undersigned, desirous of promoting the cause of liberal Christianity, do agree to pay the treasurer of the Second Universalist Society of the city of Baltimore the sums set opposite our respective names, on or before the first day of September next, for the purpose of aiding in paying all debts against said society. *James* the apostle has said, — "*Faith without works is dead.*"'

"This paper was vigorously circulated, and about two thousand dollars were realized and applied to the purpose

named. A large sum, it is true, still remained; but there was the serene daylight ahead, and no doubt was felt of the speedy accomplishment of the entire work.

"Alas, the short-sightedness of mortal men! In the midst of his work the leader was stricken down. A period suddenly came to his zealous labors. His last hours were striking. He must now lay aside the implements of his toil, and go away from the field of his efforts forever. On the 3rd of August, 1850, he was seized with the bilious dysentery, which terminated his mortal career in the short period of eleven days. During the whole of this illness his sufferings were indescribably severe; but with the same steady courage with which he had fought the battle of life he bore them to the end; and when he ascended to the many-mansioned house of the Father, he left behind a memory fragrant with the reputation and works of a good man.

"His loss to the denomination, and in particular to the society here, was indeed great. He was very generally respected. He was a good preacher, as well as a good man. There was an off-hand good-heartedness in his manners that made him popular with the young, and those not immediately associated with him in religious effort; and an enthusiastic seriousness in his preaching that made him acceptable to the more serious and mature. How long this state of things would have continued, had Mr. Cook been spared, we cannot, of course, say; for religious societies are proverbially fickle, and prone to forget on the morrow the cherished favorites of to-day. But, to all appearance, he had entered upon a long and useful career.

"How far his successor has succeeded in filling his place, it is not for me to say. Time must determine that. The task, however, that your brother commenced, he has finished; and the society of his choice and love is now prosperous and free. Yours, most truly,

"G. T. FLANDERS.

"BALTIMORE, MD., SEPT., 1854."

The conventionalities of New England differ somewhat from those of the South. In nothing, perhaps, so far as ministerial services are concerned, do they differ more than in regard to funerals. In New England, and especially in New England cities, funeral obsequies are generally performed either at the house from which the corpse is buried, or in the sanctuary where the deceased, or the friends of the deceased, have worshipped. But go as far south as Philadelphia, and the minister is made to *feel* that custom has rendered this service there far more arduous, far more trying to his health. In Baltimore, at funerals, service was usually expected at the house; the minister must then go in the procession to the grave, and there, under a burning sun in summer, or exposed to the chilling blasts in winter, must perform another and more lengthy service.

It needs but a moment's reflection to be convinced that, as funerals are attended in New England, the minister is compelled to suffer enough. He is usually ushered into a crowded room, and, in winter, into a room heated by a stove, and so constructed as to make ventilation impossible; and there (sometimes painfully impressed with the conviction that the ceiling is seeking *support* on the crown of his head) he is doomed to go through with

a service which must not be too short, and which must be performed in a tone of voice that can be heard distinctly through a half-dozen other crowded apartments. And it *often* falls to the lot of Universalist ministers, on such occasions, to speak to those who have almost entirely neglected the religious opportunities afforded them by every well-regulated society; and who now, in their affliction, expect to be so thoroughly instructed in the principles of the Gospel of Christ, that they can at once seize upon all its consolations, apply them to their stricken hearts, and from them derive strength to say, "Not my will, but thine, O God, be done!" And they are, to some extent, deemed wanting in kindness, if they aim not at this result — to achieve in an hour what they fail to accomplish satisfactorily in years of pulpit labor.

But, as we have intimated, they are usually spared a second service at the grave.

In Baltimore, this second service is indispensable. It consequently happens that the minister who has suffered all the evils of a crowded room (some of which we have enumerated) is compelled to go from this, often covered with a profuse perspiration, to join in the slow march of the procession; and, on arriving at the grave, he must stand uncovered on the damp and sometimes *frozen* ground, to comfort the mourner, to arouse the indifferent, to instruct the ignorant,— in a word, to do what the solemn occasion requires at his hand.

When we remember the excitement which the presence of death and the grave creates in a family circle,— when we remember, also, how readily, how unconsciously, the affectionate pastor participates in this excitement on the

part of his hearers, through the mysterious workings of his sympathies; and how much more susceptible the physical system is, in this state of excitement, to the ruinous consequences of exposure,— we wonder, not that health fails occasionally, but that it ever long withstands a weekly recurrence of such reckless wrongs. The whole system of conducting funerals there and here needs revision and improvement. More, far more, colds leading to bronchial difficulties, aphony, and consumption, are induced by funeral services, than by all other pastoral duties combined.

The influence of Catholicism is very widely felt in Baltimore. Those who repudiate its claims to confidence are, nevertheless, tinctured, to some extent, with respect for the rites which have invested the Catholic church with much of its power. I will not say that all these rites are unworthy the attention or the approval of Christians. I only allude to them here, for the purpose of showing that the respect accorded to them there serves to multiply the labors of the pastor, even among liberal Christians.

I recollect hearing him relate in a conference-meeting in Boston an incident which occurred in his experience there, and which, at the time, I thought had more or less connection with the Catholic custom of praying for the dead. He was one day summoned to the house of mourning in great haste. On arriving, he found a mother — I think a widow — bathed in tears, and loudly bewailing the loss of an only child. She was alone with her precious dead. She could not leave its presence. She could not think of bearing it from her home and resigning it to the grave.

And no wonder; it was beautiful in death. The hand of affection, guided by an exquisite taste, had carefully arranged its silken curls over that brow of marble whiteness, and it seemed an angel in repose. Again and again she bowed over it, gazed upon its calm features, kissed its cold lips with passionate fondness; and then, yielding to the doubts and misgivings so common to such an experience,—doubts and misgivings concerning the benignity of Divine Providence,—she would exclaim, in the wildest agony, "O, why has God taken *my* child—my *only* child—darling idol of my heart!"

Seizing upon a favorable moment, he proposed to attend prayers with her, hoping thereby to calm and assuage her grief.

"Yes, pray with me," she instantly replied; "but I have one request to make. Kneel here, beside my child; place one hand upon its forehead, the other upon my head, and pray that I may find peace."

He did as he was requested. His emotions can only be imagined, not described. Feeling himself now in a peculiar sense the mystic link between the living and the dead, the electric currents of life and death passing and repassing through his frame, he prayed—God and that bereaved mother know how fervently! The prayer was answered, and the mourner was comforted.

There could be no abatement of his interest in the Sabbath-school. It was the peculiar joy of his ministry. He loved to talk *of* it and *for* it. He gave it his best thoughts. He uttered in its behalf his most earnest prayers. After he went to Baltimore, he addressed several letters to different friends in Providence, making

special mention of the school in the latter city formerly under his charge. He addressed a communication to this school, through the columns of the *Christian Freeman*, in which he unveils his heart — his love for the pupils, and his sympathy with the teachers. One of the scholars, with a deep sense of her obligations to him for his labors and sacrifices in behalf of the school, addressed him a letter, acknowledging these obligations, to which he replies in the following feeling and grateful manner:

"BALTIMORE, Feb. 4, 1850.

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND: Your letter of January 23d was duly received, and perused with great satisfaction. This is the first moment which I have had, since its receipt, that I could call my own, and it shall be devoted to penning a few lines in reply. I was exceedingly happy in the thought that you had not forgotten me. As I held your letter in my hand, and gazed upon it, the past, all bright and beautiful, came up before me. My ministry in Providence, *especially that part of it which to me was most interesting, and most deeply impressed upon my mind,— I mean the time which I devoted to the Sabbath-school,*— was vividly brought to my mental eye, and I viewed it over and over again. The picture was beautiful, because radiant with so much that was heavenly; the back-ground was peopled with the images of such as are of 'the kingdom of God,' while in front was grouped a company trained 'up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' who, with the halo of Christian graces about them, seemed just entering the church of God, to labor for Truth and Humanity. That picture is now hung up in the gallery where cluster the

soul's beautiful images, and in a future life shall be contemplated with emotions of joy and delight.

"Your letter will be valued the more *because it came from the heart of a Sabbath-school scholar.* You refer to my 'VACANT SEAT' in the Sabbath-school. Perhaps it would be impossible for you to imagine the deep sensation, the thrill of sadness, which that expression sent through my whole being. I was moved by it even unto tears. * * * My farewell sermon, which you mention, I am glad you remember. If the old and young remember its inculcations as long as I shall, we may be able to refer to it with satisfaction when we have passed this fleeting and transitory life, and have entered upon that life where partings are unknown, and that sad word *Farewell* is never uttered."

In his own Sabbath-school he found much to do. When he went there it lacked efficiency and character, as a purely religious instrumentality. In teaching children to read and to spell, it was the means of doing good; but it failed to accomplish the great purpose of a Sabbath-school, as he understood it, and he labored to impart to it more of a New England aspect. Leaving the rudiments of secular education to the day-school, he sought to reörganize it on the basis of religious instruction alone, and encouraged the teachers to direct their attention exclusively to this subject. But, like many of the purposes of his life, this one was left just at the moment when its realization was most confidently anticipated — left for others to achieve.

For several Sabbaths before he closed his labors, he was engaged in delivering a series of discourses on important doctrinal subjects. These discourses, notwith-

standing the heat of summer, had been listened to with great interest by large and increasing audiences. He announced one for the first Sabbath in August, on the nature and conditions of salvation. The announcement was received with great satisfaction by his hearers, and they looked forward to that day with high hopes of a spiritual feast. The sermon was duly prepared, but when the day came it rained in such torrents that few ventured out to church; and these few he invited into the vestry, and there addressed them on another, but no less interesting topic, as we shall hereafter relate.

The sermon announced for that day proved to be the last he ever wrote. The subject of which he treats is one that has since been freely discussed in our denominational papers, and I subjoin the conclusions which he deduces from the arguments he presented, with great force, in the body of his discourse; conclusions expressed in the following words:

"Thus it will be seen that salvation is conditional, *both in this life and in the life to come.* Its attainment depends upon the exercise of our own agency — upon the improvement of the talents which the Father has committed to our care. God has provided salvation for us. Through Christ Jesus he has revealed it to us. By him he has called upon us to accept it. He has also endowed us with faculties for its attainment and enjoyment. So far as he is concerned, 'he hath done all things well.' But, if we would avail ourselves of the advantages of his grace, we must examine the faculties he has given us; we must employ our own agency, and *work out our salvation with fear and trembling.*

"We have spoken thus plainly, because we desired to lay before you what we conceived to be the New Testament doctrine of salvation, and *its conditions;* and, also, because we desired to direct your attention to the necessity of giving heed to this subject. If salvation is desirable, if it is worth seeking after, and if it cannot be secured except by penitence and faith, and by a solemn dedication of the heart to God, why put off this work? why delay? Hear ye not the voice of God saying, 'Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation'?

"Be not deceived, my hearers. The work *is* important. The idea that you have nothing to do to work out your own salvation, is a delusion — a terrible delusion. SALVATION IS CONDITIONAL."

Thus ends his last sermon — ends with the solemn declaration that "salvation is conditional." These words, it is needless to say, imply no doubt of the ultimate salvation of all souls; for their author firmly believed that Christ will continue to reign until all souls comply with the conditions of salvation.

The sermon seems to have been left unfinished. The broken column rising over the grave proclaims, with silent but impressive eloquence, the triumph of death, ere he whose memory it perpetuates had wasted the vigor and the strength of manhood. May not the unfinished discourse, interrupted at the very point where the hand traced the most important words ever addressed to the heart of the sinner, be regarded by us as the symbol of his life — *unfinished*, but *concluded;* and concluded, too, when the present gave the highest promise of future good!

CHAPTER XXVII.

DEATH.

"To die, is to go home."— HANSCOM.

THERE is ever a melancholy interest in the death of Christians, especially in the death of ministers of the Gospel, which is shared, to a greater or less extent, by all who have known them in life. Standing before the world as the avowed representatives of that faith which divests death of its terrors and the grave of its gloom, and encouraging others by their lessons to rise superior to all fear, to all painful apprehensions of the future, it is but reasonable that those who have listened to their instructions, and been animated by the spirit which these instructions were calculated to inspire, should feel a desire to know how they bore themselves as they approached the dark valley — in that hour when the scenes of earth receding from the mental eye, and the events of ETERNITY casting "their shadows before," fill the soul with the profoundest awe. Philosophers, of the stamp characterized by the Psalmist as "fools in their hearts," speak flippantly of death, as one of the *incidents* of existence here, and would fain have us believe that it is the necessary termination of "life's feverish dream." Some Christians who have repudiated the darker suggestions of supersti-

tion,— suggestions which point to death as the limit of probation, the gate to immortal weal or immortal woe,— are too prone to represent this last change *known* to mortals as a leap from gloom to glory, from earth to heaven. They do more than rob it of its terrors; they divest it of its solemnities. In their horror of one extreme, they rush into another scarcely less objectionable in all its moral or religious bearings. In teaching men to scorn the "fear of death" as unworthy, they verge to the weakness which makes it a light and trivial thing to die.

But a wiser philosophy, drawn from the experience of the world and permeated with the spirit of the Gospel, points to the closing scene in the life of Christ, as suggestive of the true idea of death. There is no lightness in his manner. The conflict is before him, and he feels his need of strength to secure him the victory. He would avoid it "if possible;" but, if he must engage in it, he would be prepared for the trial by some assurance of the sympathy of his Father. He would have the *cup pass from him;* but, if he *must* drink it, he would know that he was thereby doing the will of God. He prays for strength, therefore, for sympathy, for resignation to the Divine will. "*And as he prayed there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly.*"

Such a shrinking from death implies no slavish fear of its agony, or of aught beyond life's last struggle. It is rather the natural expression of a sentiment — the love of life — which God has implanted deep in the human

soul. And whoever properly meditates upon death will not rush upon it in a thoughtless mood, will neither tempt nor court the exercise of its power. He will feel that, though its triumph is the spirit's birth, *it is a solemn thing to die.* To pause, as it were, in the midst of life, when ambition has been pampered by success, and the future is full of promise; suddenly to abandon the long-cherished purposes of the heart at the very moment their realization begins to be certain, and to forego the fruition of hopes which have been counted among the richest blessings of the past; to leave family and friends, all the social endearments of earth, to tread the dark vale alone; to enter into the more immediate presence of Him who endowed the soul with all its faculties, and justly claims, in his service, the exercise of all its powers, and in the light of his glory, of his perfections, to awake *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,* to a consciousness of spiritual needs which God has seen and Jesus has deplored,— who is sufficient for these things? Who, suddenly warned of the approach of death, can say, "Not my will, but thine, be done?"

Mr. Cook appears to have been one of the few to whom the announcement of a speedy death brought no alarm. Though, from my earliest recollections of him, he regarded death with the most solemn awe, he was not terrified by its approach. For his family he would live and labor. For the cause of Christ he would defer his journey *home.* But, when summoned by the voice of the Father to his presence, no murmur escaped his lips. A thousand plans to be executed on earth had been devised; plans for the education of his children, for the advancement of the truth,

for his own personal comfort, and for the blessing of others. But the future, which had hitherto stretched out through many years, suddenly dwindled down to a moment which separated him from death; and yet he indulged no impious complaint that time was too short. He improved that moment, crowded with physical suffering which no words can adequately represent, for the benefit of his family and friends, and for deepening his sympathies with the Great Source of spiritual life.

While in Providence, in April, 1850, on a visit, his son Edgar had a severe attack of lung fever. Partially recovering from this, he was taken in June with a bilious remittent fever. For weeks he struggled with this; and when he had so far recovered as to be able to attend school one session each day, and was thought to be improving, he was prostrated again with the dysentery, which very seriously threatened his life. In a letter to the *Christian Messenger* of New York, dated Aug 1, 1850, he writes:

"The Sabbath-school connected with my society held their annual excursion to-day. This morning, at seven o'clock, about six hundred, men, women and children, assembled at the new dépôt on Calvert-street, and left in the cars for a beautiful grove on the York railroad, about nine miles from the city. Though all faces around me seemed cheerful and happy, yet I went with a reluctant and somewhat heavy heart. This was not usual for me, for I always enjoy such occasions exceedingly. But my eldest son, who had a course of the lung fever while we were in Providence last spring, and who has had a severe turn of *bilious remittent fever* since our return, was at-

tacked last Monday week with dysentery. Since Friday last, he has been very sick; for three days his case was doubtful, but yesterday a change took place for the better; to-day he continues to improve slowly, with every evidence of recovery. We have had a beautiful day for our excursion. About half-past one o'clock, however, a little shower, which lasted probably ten minutes, passed over the grove, and served to remind us all of the impressive moral lesson of Christ upon the divine impartiality, 'God sendeth the rain upon the just and the unjust.' It alarmed more than it injured, and it was amusing to see what a 'right smart' race for the long train of cars, left for convenience' sake, it occasioned. In a few minutes the sun laughingly peeped through the clouds again, and invited us back into Nature's temple, to engage with devotion in our amusements and pleasure-worship. The invitation was no sooner given than obeyed and accepted, and till six o'clock the time was faithfully occupied and very pleasantly spent. I left the grove at fifteen minutes of two, being uneasy and anxious concerning my child, though when I arrived at home I found him better and improving."

In his watchings by the bedside of this dear child, the anxious father became very much exhausted. A diarrhœa set in, which, though not very alarming in its aspects, tended to a still greater debility of the system, and, doubtless, served to predispose it to the fatal effects of the dysentery. On Saturday, the third of August, he ate his dinner with considerable relish. With other vegetables, he partook somewhat freely of green corn, of which he was very fond. But he soon felt that he had injured

himself by this indulgence, and expressed himself to this effect to his friends. He gave to Edgar, who was still confined to his bed and scarcely able to be moved, that attention which his case seemed so imperatively to demand. His sleep was much disturbed Saturday night, and he rose early Sunday morning, with symptoms in no way improved from the day previous. The morning was rainy, and he felt that he should be justified in excusing himself from service in the desk on that day. He notified his wife of his intention to remain at home; but, as the hour of worship approached, a friend, on his way to church, called at his door and invited him to a seat in his carriage, and this invitation induced a change in his purposes. He accepted it, and went to the sanctuary, *there, in the presence of a few devoted worshippers, to close his public ministry on earth!* Those who had assembled were invited into the Session Room, occupied by the Sabbath-school, and he addressed them in an extempore discourse from the words of Jesus, "FEED MY LAMBS." This text to his mind was suggestive of a most glorious theme, and was treated with great ability and effect. In the excitement of preaching he seems to have forgotten that he was the victim of disease, and he returned home flattering himself that he was better. At dinner, however, he took no food, and only drank a cup of tea.

The excitement of the morning was passing off, and the reäction was approaching. He felt it, and would fain have retired to his chamber; but he did not. A neighbor, a member of his society, who had been brought to a knowledge of the truth through the instrumentality of

his labors, was lying dangerously sick of the dysentery, and he must see him. He found him rapidly sinking, and left him fully convinced that he could not long survive. He returned home with a sad heart. Again complaining of sickness, he sought repose. But scarcely had he lain down, when the thought of a child reported to him that morning in the Sabbath-school as being very sick aroused him, and summoned him once more to the active duties of his profession. He walked some distance to the residence of her father, saw and comforted the sufferer, and then returned again. On reaching home this time, he felt that his own case needed more attention, and he remarked to his wife that he would see and consult Dr. Murphy, who had attended his son. He could not be persuaded to remain at home and have the physician sent for. He would go himself to his office. But, on arriving there, he found the doctor absent, and he left word for him to call at his residence.

All these exertions served to aggravate his disease, and when he returned from the doctor's he was too much exhausted to sit up; and, on entering his house, hastened to his room, which he never again left till death's victory was achieved.

On the day previous, he remarked to his wife *that he did not think he should live long. He had never expected to live to be an old man, and thought that his time was already at hand.* Startled by the impressive earnestness of his manner, she sought to change the current of his thoughts, and to direct them to some other, and to her more grateful subject. But this presentiment never afterwards forsook him.

Dr. Murphy called in as requested, and pronounced his a case of dysentery. His symptoms were alarming, and he called again in the evening. The next day he was several times in attendance, but all his efforts proved unavailing. The progress of the disease was fearfully rapid, and was attended by the most intense suffering. At the close of the day, on Monday, he remarked, "This day is passed, and I have not been into the street. When was it so before?" Tuesday found him no better. Medicine seemed to have no favorable effect upon him, and again he expressed his belief that his hour was rapidly approaching. In the afternoon, a spasmodic action of the lungs, resembling hiccough, made its appearance, and was continued, with short intervals, for two days. Wednesday he suffered the most excruciating pain, but still he did not murmur.

On Thursday, about four o'clock in the afternoon, his disease reached a state of collapse. This was the end of hope. Few ever pass this crisis, and recover. Dr. Murphy now called another eminent physician, for consultation. Mrs. Cook was very anxious to know their decision in his case; but, in tenderness, they hesitated about expressing it to her. She, however, insisted upon knowing. Others protested against keeping her longer in ignorance of his real situation. At length they replied that he had not one chance in a hundred for recovery. But, before they gave this opinion to her, *he had read it in their action.*

About this time, Rev. Abel C. Thomas, of Philadelphia, arrived. He had been providentially called to the city to attend the funeral of Mr. Trimble — the gentle-

man whom Mr. Cook called upon the Sabbath previous, and found in the last stages of dysentery. It devolved upon this brother to announce to Mr. Cook the fears of his physician. This service, so often imposed upon the ministers of consolation, is ever a most solemn and painful one. It was doubly so to Mr. Thomas on this occasion. Personally he was a stranger to Mr. Cook. He was introduced to him as the latter lay on the bed of death. Gladly would he have cheered his first interview with a brother, whose reputation was so familiar to him, with assurances of his speedy restoration to health, to the service of his family, and to the ministry of Christ. But he was not permitted to do so.

"I found Bro. Cook," says Mr. Thomas, "in a state approaching collapse, and from the moment I grasped his icy hand I had no hope of his recovery. He, however, rallied somewhat, inspiring most of the friends with some hopes that he would be spared.

"The watching of more than twenty-four hours confirmed me in the sorrowful conviction that he would never more stand upon his feet. It fell to my lot to open the matter to him."

I need not say that Mr. Thomas performed this sad service in a manner becoming the minister of Him who was the resurrection and the life. And he records the temper and spirit in which the painful announcement was heard. "*He received the tidings with the temper of a Christian philosopher — giving me instructions regarding divers worldly matters, including the disposition of his remains.*"

It was during this conversation that Mr. Thomas

addressed to him this significant inquiry: "What message have you for your brethren in the ministry?"

"Say to them," said he, "that it is my desire and prayer that more of harmony might prevail in all our borders." *

"When I asked him how his public ministry now appeared to him, he answered, with earnestness, '*The doctrine I have preached, and which I have loved, has ever been the chief theme of my heart. It is so now — it will be so in death — and in heaven forever.*'

* * * * * * *

"The life of Bro. Cook was luminous with his love

* See *Gospel Banner*, Sept. 7, 1850. These words suggested to the mind of Rev. H. Bacon, and he penned and published in the *Christian Freeman*, the following lines:

"O, there are wondrous voices in this world of ours,
From stars and streams, from orchard-blooms and flowers;
From the majestic forest, and the mountain grand,
The rush of waters, murmuring on the strand;
From sighing winds, whose every odorous wave
Tells of our hope, the sweetness o'er the grave.
And there are voices from the lip and heart,
That come to make our wildest pulses start,
Where passion speaks, or righteous wrong disclaims
Against old error, and her votaries shames,
And where the man of inspiration pours
The truths sublime of Him his soul adores.
But there 's a voice, more awful still to hear,
That bids hushed spirits lowly bend the ear
To catch the word, last lingering on the tongue,
Where once the speech of Gospel rapture hung
It drops — it falls — O, heed the awful sound,
Let harmony prevail, and peace abound."

of the truth; his death was triumphant by the power of his Christian faith.

"It was a sorrowful position to stand by the bedside of a dying brother-minister; and yet it was being near the gate of the kingdom, to behold him so calm and resigned in the prospect of death."

This announcement of Mr. Thomas, instead of inspiring his mind with terror, seemed to have proved a source of relief to him. It left him free to converse on those matters which, doubtless, through his whole sickness, had engaged his attention, and which he had hesitated to broach on account of the influence which he naturally supposed they might have on the mind of his family. He now felt that they understood his case, and that reserve was no longer necessary or desirable. He immediately began to give directions in regard to the disposal of his worldly effects, committing all, with the exception of his manuscripts, to the care of his wife, to be employed by her for her own and the benefit of his children. His manuscripts he directed to be put into my hands, to be disposed of as I might see fit. It was his desire that his remains should be placed in a metallic coffin, and, after a funeral service in Baltimore, should be forwarded to Chili, and there deposited in a grave in the family burial-ground of his father-in-law. "It was his request," says Mr. Thomas, "made to me personally, that Bro. W. S. Balch and myself should attend the services held in Baltimore; and that Bro. G. W. Montgomery should preach at the interment of his remains, which he wished removed to the burial-ground of his wife's kindred, near Rochester."

After matters of this character had been adjusted on Friday night, he conversed freely with his wife respecting the course open for her to pursue, and then turned to his physician, and inquired if he thought he would live till morning; and added, "If you do, I will not have the children disturbed; but if you do not, I desire to see them now." He was informed that the chances were against him, and, at his request, his children were brought to his bedside, to receive his dying counsel and benediction. "He talked with them as long as he was able," writes his widow; "told them he was about to leave them, and entreated of them to be good children; do all they could for their mother; love one another, and then come, with a report of a good life, to receive his welcome in heaven.

"And to me he said, 'Do all you can for my dear children. It will be but a little while ere we shall meet again.' I asked him if he thought he should know me, when next we met. With his icy hand he pressed mine, and replied, 'O, yes! nothing will ever blot you from my memory. At other times he would say, 'Perhaps it may be years hence, but we *shall* meet, and then it will be mine to welcome you to heaven.'"

Early Saturday morning, Dr. Williams, of the botanic school, was called in. He saw there was little ground of hope, but still thought the case worthy of a most vigorous effort. And this he was ready to make. Thirty hours he remained at his bedside, laboring most incessantly to restore the circulation, which had nearly ceased in the extremities, and at times hopes of his success seemed to be well founded. Through his exertions it was generally conceded the hour of death was deferred,

but not averted. His former physicians pronounced his case more hopeful at the expiration of the thirty hours than it had been since his attack, and they were willing to renew their efforts in his behalf.

"Sunday morning was bright and beautiful," says his widow, "and when the sun was up he called upon his attendants to throw open the blinds of the windows, that he might behold the light of one more Sabbath morning. 'This,' said he, 'is *my day* — the day on which I had hoped to die.'

"In the afternoon he suffered beyond expression; but still he sought in many ways to console me. In speaking of my efforts to bring up the children, he said, 'There will be a way provided. Put your trust in the Lord, for you know he has always been good to us!'

"He expressed a desire early that the friends should telegraph you and my father. They did so the preceding Thursday,* and my father reached Baltimore on Sunday

* The despatch reached Boston on Friday morning, August 8. The day on which it was dated, I left home for the interior of New Hampshire. And although immediately forwarded to me from Boston, I did not receive this despatch until Monday, the 12th, four days after it was dated. It was not possible to reach Boston till Tuesday afternoon. And, had I proceeded directly to Baltimore, I could not have reached there until several hours after his death.

I mention these facts to explain why I was not with him in his last sickness. He earnestly desired to see me in that trying moment. But it was otherwise ordered, and I would not complain. Hoping, on my arrival in Boston, that what the letter had intimated had been realized, that his disease had taken a favorable turn, I sent on by telegraph to know the facts, and waited for a reply. Consequently, I did not reach Baltimore till about an hour before the time appointed for his funeral in the church — a sad hour for my soul!

morning. On entering the room, James, with deep emotion, exclaimed, 'O, my dear father! have you come to take your child home again?' He had before said to me, 'You are going home to see your *father and mother, and I am going home to see mine!*'

"On Monday he said to me, 'I have one request to make; do not forget it! Have a bowl of cold water in readiness, and when my spirit returns to God sprinkle it over my face and breast.'"

On Tuesday afternoon, after having been exercised for many hours with the most terrible sufferings, he turned to Mr. Camp, the leader of his choir, and requested him to sing that favorite hymn,

> "Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly dove,
> With all thy quickening powers;
> Kindle a flame of sacred love
> In these cold hearts of ours!"

His physician was present, and joined in the heavenly song. The music seemed to inspire him with new life. Though for days previous he had been scarcely able to speak above a whisper, he was now able to unite in this peaceful strain of devotion, and to utter his soul in the true spirit of the words. When the singing closed, he felt refreshed, and so expressed himself to his friends.

Soon after this exercise, he remarked to those about him, "Now I want you to be still. I want silent communion with my God!" This request was instantly regarded with perfect silence. This was a most thrilling moment to all present. All eyes were turned upon him, — his were turned heavenward. And there he lay,

gazing, as it were, into the depths of immortal bliss. For the first time since his sickness he seemed unconscious of physical suffering,— doubtless he had risen superior to it. There he lay; and to *one*, at least, a halo of divine glory seemed to encircle his countenance. And, while steadily gazing into heaven, as it were, he broke the stillness, which had become oppressive, by clasping his hands, and faintly uttering "Glory! What a glorious death I am about to die!" He then whispered the name of some companion of his childhood, remarking that he did not know before that he was dead. His last words were "GOD IS MERCIFUL!"

Thus closed his ministry on earth, sublime as it had been energetic and useful.

He lingered on until Wednesday morning, when, at twenty minutes before two o'clock, the spirit was released from the clogs of mortality, and, as we humbly trust, permitted to join with kindred spirits before the throne.

The request he had several times repeated, that pure cold water might be sprinkled over his face and chest by the hand of his wife at the moment the spirit left its earthly house, was sacredly regarded.

It is strange that bigotry should dare to invade such a presence for the sake of robbing it of its glory, and reporting to a credulous world that the dying servant, startled by the approach of the King of Terrors, renounced his faith in the Master; and, in that trying hour, fled for comfort to the beggarly elements of modern Orthodoxy,— the proudest monument of that "wisdom which is foolishness with God." And yet, such was the fact in his case. The triumph of death was anticipated,

and the public journals announced his departure while he still lingered upon the shores of mortality. No fault is ascribed to these journals, since they were misinformed. But, no sooner had they made the announcement of his decease, than a most heartless bigotry insinuated, at first, and then boldly affirmed, that he had found Universalism insufficient to sustain the soul in the hour of death, and had, during his sickness, recanted his faith.

This report found its way to that chamber of death, to grieve and to gratify the departing herald of the great salvation,— to grieve him with a new exhibition of human weakness manifested for the support of a false system of faith; to gratify him by furnishing an occasion for him to contradict the false report, and to reäffirm, in the presence of friends and foes of his doctrine, his unwavering confidence in its truth. It was on Tuesday afternoon that he said to his attendants, "I wish you distinctly to understand that I die full in the faith which I have preached." Knowing that his physician was a Methodist, he desired to know if he heard the announcement, and was satisfied only when assured that he did.

Nor did he forget the claims of kindred, amid the terrors and the glories of death. When his brow was cold, and his lips were purple, turning to his wife, he said, "*Tell my brothers that I love them all devotedly.*"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FUNERAL, AND TESTIMONIES OF RESPECT.

Mr. Cook requested that Rev. W. S. Balch and Rev. A. C. Thomas should attend his funeral in Baltimore, and that Rev. G. W. Montgomery should preach at his interment in Chili. He had ever regarded Mr. Balch as a sincere and devoted friend; and at the time of this request acknowledged his many obligations to him. And, as the highest expression of his regard, he named him as his first choice to deliver his funeral sermon.

But, in the words of Mr. Thomas, "Br. Balch could not be present, being on a New England visitation, where the telegraph could not reach him in season." And hence the service devolved upon Mr. Thomas alone. And the family, with all the friends of the deceased who were present, will unite with me in saying that it was most acceptably performed. He publishes his own feelings in the following words: "It was doubly sad to be all alone in the services of the melancholy occasion. The remains, enclosed in an iron coffin, cemented, were in the broad aisle, in front of the pulpit,— the church clad in mourning, and a congregation numbering, I should think, a thousand souls.

"The widow, and her two orphan sons, and her venerable father, and Bro. T. D. Cook, were not the only mourners. Ah, me! how many hearts were bowed down in that great assembly!"

At the hazard of subjecting myself to a charge of needless repetition, I must be allowed to introduce here an extract from the conclusion of Mr. Thomas' sermon. The remains were removed to the church on Calvert-street, on Thursday evening. The house was draped in mourning in a manner to impress with solemn awe the heart of every beholder. And at an early hour on Friday afternoon the friends began to assemble, to pay the last tribute of respect to his memory. At half-past three o'clock, the family, with a few friends, left his late residence, and reached the church about ten minutes before the hour — four o'clock — appointed for the service.

The congregation having previously assembled, Mr. Thomas commenced his service. He took for his text the words of Jesus, "*Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;*" and he exhibited in a clear light the *consolatory power of the Gospel.* In conclusion, he remarked:

"Christ's mission to 'comfort all who mourn' has thus been largely considered, mainly because of its interesting and important character — and also partly, I confess, because of reluctance to approach the special occasion of this assemblage.

"A man whose irreproachable life adorned and benefited every neighborhood in which he resided has been removed from our midst; and the places that once knew him shall know him no more. The secular press of

your city, with honorable disregard of all sectarian bias and prejudices, has but uttered the public sentiment in lamenting the departure of one so highly gifted, and whose brief career as a citizen gave promise of eminent usefulness in the community.

"A son and brother, who was the joy and pride of the household of blood-kindred, has spoken the last word of family endearment on earth.

"A husband, who was garnered in the heart of a companion whom he esteemed with almost idolatry, has passed away, to be her treasure on high.

"A father, whose affection for his children was akin to the love of the ONE FATHER OF ALL, has been called home; and did not the wail of the orphans accompany him through the portals of everlasting life?

"A pastor — ah, my friends! how grievously the circles of thought and sorrowing reach unto *you!* The realities of a few months of successful coöperation in Christ's Gospel,— the hopeful prospect of years of union in the sublime duties and joys of a religious life,— how sadly are these contrasted with the opening grave that soon shall hide your pastor in the bosom of your common mother! And how befitting are the funereal robes of this house of God, and the solemn tones of yonder choir, to the lips lately so eloquent in this pulpit, and now cold and dumb before you!

"And the dirge shall pass with its penetrating chords into the souls of our ministry of evangelism; and brother shall say to the brethren, as now I say to you, 'Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?' Not such an one as was

Abner, clothed in the panoply of war; but a baptized warrior in the hosts of God, strong of hand and stout of heart to do God's will of truth and love.

"Never was I privileged to hearken to the public ministrations of that voice,— the voice which was wont so mightily to stir men's souls within them; but such personal testimony was not necessary to the assurance that he spoke in demonstration of the spirit and of power. The uniform witness wherever he has taught of the kingdom of heaven, and the success of his ministry in the several locations of his pastoral life, attest the energy and eloquence of the departed apostle.

"His more than ordinary qualifications as a public speaker were associated with a vigorous mind, and a heart that glowed with a vehement love of the truth.

"'The doctrine I have preached,' said he, when I opened to him the almost certainty that his earthly career was well-nigh finished, and my desire to learn how his ministry now appeared to him,— '*The doctrine I have preached, and which I have loved, has always been the chief theme of my heart. It is so now — it will be so in death — and in heaven forevermore!*'

"In this deep devotion to the truth as it had been unveiled to his understanding, together with unusual competency to express and illustrate it, and the force of a determined will, lay the secret of his power.

"What he accomplished for *you*, O people, will be forgotten only when gratitude and confidence die out of the souls of men! Difficulties of long years of trial were swept away when he awakened within you the hopeful '*we* CAN' — for, of this thought was born the resolu-

tion, '*we* WILL.' And nobly has that resolution been fulfilled.

"Around him were gathered, as to a centre of irresistible attraction, the faithful spirits who had toiled and prayed and wept for Zion; and though the labors and love of previous pastors were remembered with hallowed thankfulness, you felt that the hour of full redemption had come, and the man.

"And around him were still gathering other kindred spirits,—one of whom, born into the kingdom on earth through his ministry, had scarcely been welcomed to the kingdom above, ere the pastor was bowing by his side before the throne.

"Let us bless God for the testimony of his life; let us bless God for the triumph of his death!

"For *him* life had many attractions; but death no alarms. Never shall I forget the deep feeling with which he uttered his interest in the welfare of his wife and children, and his prayer that the Lord would ever have them in his holy keeping.

"Never should *you* forget the message with which he charged me, and which I now deliver, 'That he loved you dearly, and had hoped to accomplish somewhat more in your behalf in the way of divine experience; but, if it pleased the Lord to take him away in the midst of his years, his resignation to Heaven would be associated with heartiest prayers for *you*.'

"With the temper of a Christian philosopher, and in answer to my inquiries, he gave directions regarding the disposal of his manuscripts, and other affairs of a temporal character, ending with instructions respecting his remains.

'I am comparatively a stranger in Baltimore,' said he, 'and my family will undoubtedly remove to the vicinity of their kindred. Thither let me be conveyed, that we may rest together in the dust.'

"Truly may we affirm that death had no alarms, no terrors, for *him*. In the clearness of his faith-vision, the realm of immortality was but the scene of perpetual and wonderful revelations of the love of God, with no cloud to cast a shadow, no darkness to dim the glory of unending day, no cries of souls lost to mar the harmonious anthem of souls redeemed.

"In the range of his ministry he had taught of that radiant world, until spirits who had long groped as the blind saw the dawning of life and immortality, and joined in the triumphal annunciation, that

> 'Darkness and doubt are now fleeing away;
> No longer we roam in conjecture forlorn;
> So breaks on the traveller, faint and astray,
> The bright and the balmy effulgence of morn.
> See Truth, Love, and Mercy, in triumph descending,
> And Nature all glowing in Eden's first bloom;
> On the cold cheek of death smiles and roses are blending,
> And beauty immortal awakes from the tomb.'

"The happiness thus imparted to others was abundantly his own in the trial of great bodily suffering, and in the hour of departure. He bade his attendants remember that he died as he had lived, in the faith of the world's redemption; and, near the closing scene, he gave evidence of a continued heart-yearning for the presence and power of the Spirit of truth, by desiring a devoted brother at his side to sing the inspiring hymn,

'Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly dove.'

"With a voice scarcely audible by reason of life's waning, he joined in the strains of that divine lyric; and its prayer was heard and consummated in heaven!

"Not, therefore, for *him* we mourn. We rejoice that he has joined the glorious company of the celestials, while we deeply sympathize with his bereaved family, and the bereaved church of Christ."

I cannot recall the action of the friends in Baltimore during his sickness, and after his death, without feeling sentiments of the profoundest gratitude rising up in my soul and demanding expression. Never did friends prove themselves more faithful, more devoted! From the time that he took to his bed until his spirit was released by death, they were present with him, anxious to relieve his sufferings,— to stay the progress of his disease, and to ward off the arrows of death. And when they found that their efforts in his behalf had availed no more than simply to smooth his passage to the grave, they turned to the objects of his love,— to his widow and her fatherless children,— and, with a noble generosity, freely bestowed their favors upon them. At the auction of his household furniture, they evinced a liberality worthy of all commendation. They cheerfully bore all the expenses of the funeral, and the conveyance of the remains, together with their escort, to Rochester,— a distance of over five hundred miles. At a large meeting of the society, called for that purpose, they voted unanimously to continue the salary to his family up to the close of his first pastoral year,— a donation of about three hundred and seventy-

five dollars. No mark of respect,* no act of kindness or courtesy, was omitted.

* The following resolutions were unanimously adopted by the society, Aug. 25, 1854:

"*Resolved*, That the Second Universalist Society and congregation of Baltimore, while striving to bow submissively to the will of Providence, cannot but deeply deplore the afflictive dispensation which has taken away our beloved pastor and brother, Rev. James M. Cook.

"A few months of most pleasant intercourse with him, and marked prosperity under his ministry, inspired us with hopes of long years of a happy connection as pastor and people. The brightness of the prospect deepens the gloom of our bereavement.

"But, in the midst of our sorrow, we think of those more nearly connected with him, and deeply sympathize with his mourning widow and her little orphans, and also with the numerous kindred of both branches of his family.

"We feel illy competent to the expression of condolence, being ourselves mourners; yet, a solemn and truthful prayer goes up from all our hearts, that God would have the widow and her sons in his special keeping, and minister to them the abundant consolations of the Gospel.

"We are persuaded that our departed brother left behind him no superior and few equals for the station he so efficiently occupied in our society; and long shall we remember with gratitude the devotion of his whole mind and heart to the mission of the love of God; and we hope always to feel the power of the faith which he so eloquently preached, by the precepts of which he regulated his life, and in the holy triumphs of which he departed to a better world.

"*Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions, signed by the Board of Trustees, be transmitted to the family of the deceased, and also to our denominational journals for insertion.

"EZRA WHITMAN,
ELY. ROBINSON,
LINCOLN MARSTON,
THAD. C. CRAFT,
JAS. L. CAMP,
} Board of Trustees.

"JAMES L. CAMP, Sec. of Board of Trustees."

On arriving in Rochester the remains were placed in a tomb, whence they were taken to Chili for final interment. Rev. Mr. Montgomery remarks:

"On the 27th of September the final funeral service of our lamented brother took place in Chili, at the house of his father-in-law, Br. Wooden. A large number of friends from the neighborhood, from Churchville, Rochester, and Fairport, were in attendance, together with Brs. M. B. Smith, C. S. Skinner, and C. H. Dutton. Their solemnity, their tearful attention and their deep feelings, showed their love and respect for the departed, and their earnest sympathy for his afflicted widow and her children. According to a request uttered by Bro. Cook in his dying hour, the writer attended and delivered a discourse, using Matt. 11: 28 as a text. After the admirable tribute paid to the memory of Bro. Cook by Bro. A. C. Thomas, I feel that no addition from me will be expected."

The society in Baltimore were not yet satisfied. They could not omit a single service which he had requested, and therefore made arrangements with Mr. Balch to preach a funeral discourse in the church, which he did.

Of this discourse I make the following extracts, constituting his introduction, and showing the author's appreciation of the man,— of his life and his death. Mr. Balch's text was, "By it he, being dead, yet speaketh." —Heb. 11: 4.

He commences thus:

"BRETHREN: I am present with you to-day for the first time, and under circumstances which appeal very forcibly to the tenderest sensibilities of my nature. You

have called upon me, by a vote of your society, to deliver a discourse on the death of Bro. James M. Cook, believing, as you say, 'no one more fitted for that duty, and no one more acceptable, could be desired, inasmuch as it was the expressed wish of your deceased pastor.'

"I feel myself illy qualified to perform such a duty in a way to answer such expectations; and, had it not been the dying request of one of my best friends, I should shrink from the attempt, and utterly refuse to put so severe a tax upon my feelings. It were more suitable for me to be here to listen than to speak,— to be a mourner rather than a comforter. I knew our departed brother too intimately, and loved him too well, to be his eulogist. There are secrets and depths of affection in the human heart too sacred and too holy for the utterance of words; and the soul wades through them, on such a time, in solemn silence, overwhelmed with a mysterious power, too full to speak, and reluctant even to hear. The tearful eye, the flushed countenance, or wan and pale, the stifled breathing, the choking voice, or dumb with sorrow, the quivering lips, the trembling, subdued, and faltering manner, and convulsive movement; this is the language of the soul when it sighs out its deep emotions, and appeals most touchingly to the warm sympathies of kindred spirits, and to the compassion of God.

"'The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy.' But we are not strangers, for, through our brother, at whose death our sympathies meet and commingle in one sentiment of sorrow, we are acquainted,— we are friends. In the hopes and joys of our blessed religion we are acquainted, we

are brethren, and our hearts beat in unison while we contemplate the sad event which has brought us together. We feel that there is but one source left us to which we can go for comfort, but one Being in whom we can find relief. At his altar we reverently bow, and humbly seek compassion, while we try to repress our grief, and yield our wills in filial submission to his, regarding devoutly his most glorious purpose, which has respect, we believe, to the ultimate good of all his creatures.

"To some it may seem that a period has elapsed since we were startled by the melancholy tidings that 'BRO. COOK IS DEAD,' sufficient for the first spontaneous gush of sorrow to abate, and give place to a more calm, subdued, and chastened grief; to a mingled sadness, which wipes away the tear, and looks with philosophic gaze and Christian fortitude and hope upon these bereavements, leaning upon the promises which cannot fail, and revering the hand of Him who does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men but for their profit. But there are cords entwined around the faithful hearts which cannot be parted without disturbing the very fountains of life, and leaving an impress too deep to be eradicated by any circumstance, and too conspicuous to be covered by the pall of time.

"We do well, I know, to give heed to the admonition which bids us 'sorrow not as others who have no hope;' but heaven and humanity would disown us if we felt no pang of grief at the death of a friend and a brother beloved. We do well to listen to the sweet words which assure us that 'blessings are for them that mourn, for they shall be comforted;' for it is when heavenly joy

mingles with our earthly sorrow that we are truly blessed. We do well to suppress our anguish within proper bounds, to smooth the sterner features of our grief, and look upon the death of this brother as another of the events of a kind Providence,— another of the great lessons designed to make us wise and good, willing to die and prepared to live. We do well to look back over the whole life of our brother who has left us, and, in the clear light reflected upon it by the sweet triumphs of his death, to contemplate it in its manner of development in a way to derive instruction for the profit of our own souls; for 'by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.' We do well to consider the suddenness of his death, the manner in which he was cut off in the midst of his years, in the noontide of his usefulness and success, and laid low in the dark, damp, narrow house appointed for all the living, there to sleep in silence the unwaking sleep of death; for 'by it he, being dead, yet speaketh;' and he admonishes us not to cling too fast hold of the things of earth, but to be also prepared and ready; for in such an hour as we think not the angel of death will call for us. We do well to consider his trusting confidence in the goodness of God,— never shaken,— his calm resignation, his strong faith and brilliant hopes, his remembrance of cherished friends, his warm and loving and faithful heart, and his prayerful anxiety for the permanent success of that glorious cause to which he had given his labor and his life; 'for by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.' We do well to think of him, not as here among us any longer as we were wont to see him, full of life, and love, and goodness, ready to enter at once and fully

into all our feelings, willing to bear a portion of our joy or sorrow, and always making us feel better satisfied with the world, and with God, and with ourselves; but as now returned to the bosom of the Father, a dweller in heaven, the companion of angels and the spirits of the just made perfect; there basking in the clear sunlight of God's effulgent glory, bathing his soul in the fountain of love, and rapt into ecstasy the most complete at beholding in reality the bright beauties of the interior life, of which he had clear visions, and which he loved to contemplate with such enthusiastic delight, while yet sojourning in the flesh; 'for by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.'

"Yes, our brother yet speaks to us. He speaks to us from the memories of the past and the hopes of the future; from the memories which cluster about his brief but brilliant career upon earth, and the solemn but triumphant scenes of his sickness and death; and from beyond the silence of the tomb, where the body rests in peace, there comes to us a spirit voice, calm, clear, and sweet as the notes of love, and full of wisdom, and counsel, and comfort, bidding us be of kind and forgiving hearts, of stout and zealous wills, of active and industrious hands, in the glorious cause to which the labors of his life were consecrated. Before us there passes a vision more clear and truthful while we meditate upon this sad event, which we do well to contemplate in reference to ourselves, to our conduct, condition and prospects, in a way to correct the errors of the past, perform the duties of the present, and press forward to the joys of the future."

On the announcement of his death in the public

journals, there was everywhere throughout the denomination a feeling of sadness expressed, and a sincere regret that one so useful in the service of the Master here had been so early called to his reward.* In a notice in the *Christian Messenger*, of New York, written by one of its editors, who knew him well, the following words occur:

"Bro. Cook's family, the society in Baltimore, and

*The Second Society in Providence was convened immediately on the announcement of his death, and unanimously passed the following resolutions:

"Whereas, This Society has learned, with deep and heartfelt sorrow, the sudden death of our late beloved friend and former pastor, Rev. James M. Cook, who died in Baltimore, on Wednesday morning, Aug. 14, 1850; and, as Bro. Cook was so recently our pastor, in which capacity he won the esteem and affection of a large circle of friends and acquaintances, it is thought proper that we manifest our respect for his memory, and our sympathy and condolence with his family.

"Therefore *Resolved*, That by this dispensation of Providence his family have lost a devoted husband, a kind and affectionate father, the church over which he presided a faithful and worthy minister, and our denomination an able, bold, and successful advocate of the doctrine of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

"*Resolved*, That we heartily sympathize with the widow, whose residence with us won the esteem and respect of all who knew her, in the irreparable loss she has sustained by this bereavement. Also with Edgar and James, her orphan children, who resided among us at an age which excited our deepest interest in their happiness and welfare. We commend them to their Father in heaven for future guidance and instruction.

"*Resolved*, That these resolutions be entered upon the records of the Society, and that copies, signed by the president and clerk, be transmitted, one to the family of the deceased, and one to the church over which our late Bro. Cook was settled.

"Sylvester R. Jackson, *President.*

"G. A. Seagrave, *Clerk.*"

the denomination, sustain a great loss. Sincerely do we sympathize with the bereaved widow and orphan children in the sudden loss of a kind husband and father, and with the society of which he was pastor in the affliction which has thus come upon them. Bro. C. has ever been a useful minister. He commenced preaching, we believe, in central New York, and labored with much success in Fairport, and the 'region round about.' Thence he removed to Providence, R. I., and took charge of the Second Society of Universalists in that city. There he was greatly beloved, and the society prospered much under his labors. It is but a few months since he removed from that city, and he seemed peculiarly fitted for the society in Baltimore. There he had, in a short time, done a great work; and our cause, under his able ministrations, was moving forward with unusual prosperity. We lament that he is taken away in the midst of his usefulness, but not for his sake do we mourn; he has gone to his rest, to enjoy the fruition of the blessed faith he so faithfully preached."

The *Trumpet* gave expression to the following sentiments, which were responded to by the *Christian Freeman*, and indeed by all the denominational papers.

"The blow," says Mr. Whittemore, "is very severe to the society in Baltimore. We can scarcely tell what the effect will be upon them. *No man could have done more, in so short a time, to lift a society out of embarrassment, than Bro. Cook had done since his removal to that place.* * * * * He went there when he was greatly needed. He took hold with a strong hand, and by his assiduity and judicious movements he

raised money enough, in a short time, to free the society from debt, or nearly so.

"As a preacher, he excelled in certain respects. He was a man to move the masses. He spoke without writing, and he delivered his message of divine truth with great power. He aimed not at elegant words and polished sentences, but he aimed to speak the truth in demonstration of the spirit. He aimed to reach the heart. He would keep the attention of a thousand people fixed intently upon his theme through a long discourse. His sermon delivered in the Warren-street church, during the session of the U. S. Convention in Boston, in 1845, is an illustration of the truth of what we say. There an immense auditory listened to him with the greatest interest for a long time, for they were unconscious of its rapid flight. They caught his feelings, they rejoiced with him, they wept with him, and at the close the general expression of the people was, *that* was the Gospel, *that* came from the preacher's heart and reached our hearts."

Mr. Whittemore is not alone in the opinion expressed above. These public occasions were his delight, and he seemed to draw inspiration from them. The venerable Dr. Butler, of Alexander, N. Y., says, in a letter to Rev. W. B. Cook: "I heard him deliver several discourses from the pulpit, the last of which was at the annual meeting of the Genesee Association, held at Perry, Wyoming county, in June, 1848; and believe me, my dear sir, when I assure you that, for fluency of speech, fervency of manner, and earnest and devotional feeling, I have never seen him excelled in the pulpit. Without any thought or design of detracting in the least from the

powerful and effective eloquence of our most celebrated and useful divines, I feel constrained to acknowledge that I have never seen or heard the man that could command that fixed and earnest and undivided attention of his audience as he could. Why, sir, his whole manner, when he became engaged and comprehended his subject, was the very perfection of eloquence! His eye, his gestures, his whole contour from head to foot, were eloquence itself,— a complete galvanic battery of flesh and blood, that dealt its resistless blows suantly and with equal force upon his whole congregation, holding them in breathless silence while he expatiated upon the paternity of God, his design in creation, the destiny of the race, the attributes of our heavenly Father, the mission of the Saviour, the destruction of sin, the promises of the Gospel, and the complete and perfect ingathering into the heavenly fold, at last, of the whole family of man! His mind was a boundless storehouse of Scripture, reason, and common sense; and his arguments — legitimately deducible from the works of creation and the volume of revelation — were clear and convincing, and unanswerable to all intelligent and inquiring minds. I am aware that we have many preachers in our connection that are his equals, and probably superiors, in point of classical attainments and historical and literary researches; but I have yet to learn of one who, in his day, has accomplished more in breaking up the '*fallow ground*' of the heart, removing the errors and prejudices consequent upon early religious training, and leading the anxious and inquiring mind into the way of truth as it is in Jesus, than our dearly-beloved and much-lamented James M.

Cook. His style of preaching was eminently scriptural, devotional, argumentative and convincing; always addressed to the intellectual faculties, followed by an overpowering appeal to the heart and moral sensibilities."

We have thus, from the many received, given a few testimonies, which we think true to the public sentiment where he was best known. These, with one voice, proclaim his power and efficiency in the service of his Master, and add to our regrets that our Zion was so early called to mourn his withdrawal from a ministry so much needed on earth.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONCLUSION — ANALYSIS OF HIS CHARACTER.

THE perusal of the preceding pages will have prepared the mind of the attentive reader to appreciate the following *analysis of his character*, which I am permitted to give in the words of brethren who knew him well. And the reputation of these brethren is such as to relieve the mind of the reader from all apprehensions of being invited, in this chapter, to the profitless task of pondering a senseless eulogy — a eulogy dictated by a blind partiality, and perpetrated in disregard, or in mockery, of the character which it professes to delineate. It may indeed be a eulogy; but, if so, it is a eulogy which his life and death wrought out in the convictions of its authors, and which owes but little of its charms to their imagination.*

Rev. Mr. Balch, in his funeral discourse at Baltimore, thus exhibits his mental, moral, and religious character:

*In the *Trumpet* of January 11, 1851, Rev. R. Tomlinson gives a "general portrait of his character and life," remembering "him as the *man*, the *Christian*, and the *minister;*" and in doing so, from what he had seen and heard, furnishes an analysis of his character at once striking, philosophical, and truthful. We commend it to the attention of the reader

"Of the life, character and labors of Bro. Cook, it is not needful that I speak to you at length. He lived with you long enough for you to know him, and love him, and understand his manner of working. You saw him as he was, for he wore no disguise. He deceived no one. He suffered no form nor fashion of conventional life to prevent the frankness or chain the impulses of his nature. He was always open, direct and positive, sending forth on every breath the genuine sentiment of his inmost soul. He was, therefore, a reliable man. Nobody that knew him ever distrusted his honesty or sincerity, or ever expected to be deceived by him. He never played a double or a doubtful part. He came promptly and boldly up to his position; and there he stood, immovable as the hills, willing to be hacked and flayed alive rather than yield a point he deemed right and defensible.

"He was of quick perception, and therefore able to discern and lead the way more rapidly than all were willing to follow. This rapidity seemed to some to border, sometimes, close upon rashness; but a little time usually determined the correctness of his judgment, and secured for him respect. He was quick to perceive, ready to adopt, and determined in pursuit; but willing to change or retract honorably when convinced of a mistake. He was generous and forgiving. He retained no grudge, but was always willing to go more than half way to make concession when there was a mutual wrong; yet under no circumstance would he yield the right, or deny the true. He was firm and faithful to the convictions of conscience. The bitterest persecution, the coldest neglect, the most unbearable domineering and personal insult, though it

made him deeply sad and unhappy, could not swerve him a hair's breadth from a line of duty clearly traced upon his conscience; between duty and interest he never hesitated. He was not an envious man. So base a passion found no abiding-place in his soul. He rejoiced in others' prosperity, and felt for another's woe; and never withheld the meed of honor where deserved, or his sympathy and influence where he could do good. He was an ambitious man; but he relied for success, not on the halting and downfall of others, but upon the exertions of his own character. He was willing to work that he might win. And he did work with all his might in whatever his hand found to do; he was never timorous, unbelieving or lazy, but full of courage, full of faith, and full of zeal, willing to do and willing to suffer, but anxious to conquer in the name of God and for the sake of truth. He *over-worked*, and the excitable elements of his composition early gave way under the pressure of the load he too willingly imposed on them.

"His mind rose superior to his body; it towered above the shattered tabernacle of earth, which, no longer fit for its service, it exchanged for 'a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' In this he groaned, and toiled, and suffered, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with his house from above, into which he is gone, and his mortality is swallowed up of life.

"It is profitable for us to contemplate the peculiarities of his character, and, so far as in agreement with a true humanity, copy the traits most suitable to our own sense of duty and propriety. Let us think of him in his public character as a preacher of the everlasting Gospel. We

shall find much in him to admire. From the age of eighteen, when he entered the ministry, he devoted his whole soul to the work he had undertaken. It became the great theme, the all-absorbing purpose, of his soul. He never looked back. He never allowed any worldly consideration to cool his ardor or delay his effort. He never dreamed of wealth, or fame, or friendship, to be gained in any other way. No sacrifice was great enough to deter him, and no promises could dissuade him from a cause he so much loved.

"He commenced preaching with scarce any preparation other than a soul full of the love of God, and anxious to teach his fellow-men the way of salvation. He could not stop to study a system of theology, but rushed forward into the field, at the first opening, and began his work. Curiosity and surprise attended his first efforts, and made up in part for his deficiencies in the qualifications of a good preacher, till application and experience enabled him to achieve what was lacking in his early preparation and labors.

"Perhaps he could not be called a thorough student, or sound theologian, in the scholastic use of these words. But he was a clear thinker, quick to perceive and ready to communicate. He possessed the important gift which an apostle calls 'aptness to teach.' If he had not system, he had fire, and made good use of the talents committed to his keeping. He was zealous and resolute, and all his force was given to the work of the ministry. His soul was fully baptized into the Master's work, and, waking or *sleeping*, it was the subject of his thoughts and the joy of his heart."

I conclude with the following from Rev. O. A. Skinner, of Boston,—a man who reads character with great accuracy, and who had many opportunities to determine the predominant elements in the one he here so forcibly delineates. He says:

"I became acquainted with Rev. James M. Cook in Rochester, N. Y., while on my way to the United States Convention of Universalists, at its session in Akron, O., A. D. 1843. I preached to a large congregation a week-day evening lecture, and he made one of the audience. He had a very marked countenance; and, though I had no introduction to him, he arrested my attention. There was a glow upon his face, and a lustre in his eye, which clearly indicated a deep interest in the subject of the discourse, and made me feel that I had at least one hearer in whose soul the doctrines advanced found a hearty response. I was glad, therefore, to find him among those who tarried, after the conclusion of the service, for an introduction. He gave me a cordial greeting; and his manner, with the tones of his voice, impressed me, if possible, more deeply than his appearance had done. I felt at once that he was no ordinary man, and that there were in him elements of peculiar power. During my brief stay in the place, I saw him frequently, and my interest in him increased with my acquaintance.

"I went on to the convention in advance of him, as I was engaged to spend a Sabbath in Massillon before the meeting of the convention. When I arrived at Akron, he was there, full of life and energy and zeal, talking earnestly upon the Gospel. The gathering on the occa-

sion was immense; the people came in canal-packets and all kinds of vehicles, filling the church and the area covered by a large awning raised upon one of its sides. A stand for the preachers was erected in the window of the church, so that they could address the audience in the house and under the awning at the same time. The meeting was one of rare interest. Father Ballou was there, and preached one of his mighty and eloquent sermons. Hundreds heard him then for the first time, and for the last time; and scores on scores, who had removed from New England to what was once called the West, had again an opportunity of listening to the man who, long years before, had opened their eyes to the glory of the Gospel. Brs. Whittemore, Rogers, Todd, Sawyer, Balch, Gurley, Pingree, and others, preached on the occasion, and all with a power that far surpassed their usual efforts. The meeting was continued through the week and the following Sunday; and, though I had preached on the second day of the convention, I was so earnestly entreated to remain till Sunday that consent was given. Br. Cook occupied the stand one half of the day; and his sermon produced a most thrilling effect. It was remarkable for pathos and its appeals to the affections. I have never seen a congregation more deeply moved than by his sermon. Though the subject was not new, though the reasoning was not particularly marked for its strength or closeness, he had his audience entirely at his command. No one could relate a story more happily or effectively than he. I shall never forget the two stories introduced in the sermon on that occasion. They were appropriate, touching, and produced a most powerful

influence. There was hardly a heart present that did not throb with deep emotion, or an eye that was not wet with tears; and if his arguments had failed to convince the judgment of any hearer, the appeal to the affections was so overwhelming, that they must have felt an assurance that he was right, and that no other religion could satisfy the soul.

"From that time I saw him only on a few occasions, till he removed to Providence; after which, my acquaintance with him became intimate, and my friendship ripened into affection; for I saw in him a true man, a faithful Christian, and an earnest, devoted minister.

"During his residence in Providence, I came with him, on one occasion, in the steamer Vanderbilt, from New York to Stonington, soon after the appearance of a work entitled Divine Revelations of Nature, made up of lectures which it was pretended were delivered by a clairvoyant. He had a copy of the work, which he had read with attention. Its claims were of the most imposing character, and those by whom it had been produced confidently asserted that it would supersede the Bible. That, however, was no great commendation, according to the teachings of the new revelation; for it represents the Bible as a book of glaring errors, and only a poor guide even in religion and moral duties. Br. Cook was indignant that any should claim for a work which was a mere reproduction of the Vestiges of Creation, of Fourier, and popular infidel writers, superiority to the Bible. We occupied, with a friend, a large state-room; and, after we retired, spent some time in conversation. At length he fell asleep; but he had not been long asleep

before, lifting his head from his pillow, and sitting up in bed, he began to talk in an indistinct manner to himself. Then he uttered one of the most grand and solemn prayers to which I ever listened. I had heard of his talking in his sleep, of his praying and preaching in that state, but had never before been a witness of it. After the prayer was concluded, he arose, took the book which he had been reading, and began to criticize its merits. His remarks were cutting and sarcastic, full of pungency and power. Jackson Davis and Jesus Christ! — to compare them together was blasphemy. Divine Revelations of Nature superior to the Bible! — why, it would take more books like the one I hold than could lie between New York and Boston to make a book equal to the Bible! It is full of infidelity; it denies Christ; — it rejects his glorious Gospel! Thus he went on, in a strain of withering sarcasm and condemnation, denouncing the new Bible, and affirming his adherence to the old one. That he was in a somnambulic state, I have no doubt; and yet, seer as he was, he unqualifiedly denied all the boasted claims of the book that was to revolutionize the world!

"Br. Cook possessed rare powers as a speaker. In all the fields of his labor which I have visited, he was very popular. In Victor, N. Y., he had great congregations, and the cause prospered under his ministry. It was the same in Providence and Baltimore, though in the last-named place he preached only a short time. His sermons were practical, and practical in the true sense. He deduced from the doctrines of his religion the duties which man owes to God and his neighbor. Here,

in part, was the secret of his success; his hearers saw that the great aim of his ministry was to render them holy. But he had other elements of power. There was something peculiarly vitalizing in his voice. He spoke with a nervous energy that arrested and fixed the attention; his words were thrown forth like arrows from a bow,— instead of gliding from his lips as the gentle stream glides along the valley, they were shot out, and came like successive volleys. But this was not all. His words were full of warmth; they came heated and glowing, so that with their force were connected ardor and love and life. He preached like a man whose soul was on fire, who was full of enthusiasm, and whose energies were all quickened into vigorous action. He believed all he said; he felt all he said; and he seemed to be animated and strengthened and encouraged by the assurance that he could inspire others, and give them his faith and his hope and his love. And here was the chief source of his power in the pulpit. He took entire possession of his hearers, and swayed them as he pleased."

From what has now been said, the reader will form his own estimate of the character I have attempted to exhibit. If, in contemplating its brighter aspects, he finds incitements to virtue and godliness, he will not have read in vain. If he fails in this, I have written to no purpose, and must plead, in extenuation of my unprofitable labor, that it was commenced, continued, and is now finally consummated, under the solemn conviction that the subject of my theme was a devout man, at times full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, loving God, and delighting in his service; an efficient and faithful minister of

the Lord Jesus Christ, never happier than when preaching the everlasting Gospel, or, influenced by its spirit, when ministering to the wants of the suffering.

> "—— To relieve the wretched was his pride,
> And e'en his failings leaned to Virtue's side;
> But, in his duty prompt in every call,
> He watched and wept, he prayed and felt, for all.
> And as a bird each fond endearment tries,
> To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
> He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
> Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."